What The Wild Flowers Tell Us

Dudley Oliver Osterheld

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What the Wild Flowers Tell Us

The Common Dandelion

It has the flavor and substance of the best coffee.
It produces sleep. Coffee keeps you wide awake.

What the Wild Flowers Tell Us

Nature Talks With Young People

By
DUDLEY OLIVER OSTERHELD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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BV4571
.D8

DEC 12 1921

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

©Cl.A630742

no 1

SHS 16 Dec. 1921

Foreword

OVER and above all other influences and institutions, Home is really the place where the character of a child is molded, and the trend of its life directed. With grave anxiety, parents watch, not only the good but the evil traits, as they appear in their children, and are often sorely put to, to check the development of the latter, and to foster and encourage the former. Baby's first lisping word and first intelligent action are quickened and prompted by the parents' interest in, and sympathy with, the child's welfare. Thus is commenced a mutual sense of need and co-ordination, which should never be broken down.

It is with a desire to do something to aid mothers and fathers in the creation and development of such a sacred and invaluable bond, that this collection of flower-stories is published. In it, parents may find many lessons taught by the field and wayside blossoms, such as make for the strengthening of the better side of their children's characters, and for the correction and elimination of their shortcomings and undesirable tendencies.

A few quiet moments spent in reading one of these stories to a child, followed by a patient, ten-

der application of its lesson to a fault, or weakness, or virtue the child has commenced to develop, may do much to expand the best and eradicate the worst, while, at the same time, serving to promote and preserve a loving and sympathetic understanding between parent and child, so beneficial and desirable in every home.

But the above is not by any means the only use to which these stories may be put. They should possess interest for Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, junior congregations, kindergarten groups, parents, public school teachers, preachers, children's camp directors, rural residents, and even farmers. Dieticians and others interested in food values will find useful information about the food properties of the wild flowers mentioned. Every flower dealt with is a food flower; and every story deals with some habit or duty in child-life. The stories might also be read with profit on hikes.

Originally the stories in this little collection were told by the author to a large group of children in a down-town church of a great city, where the chemical fumes from the innumerable surrounding factories almost prevent grass from growing. The plan which the author followed in the original presentation was to devote about fifteen minutes each Sunday to story-telling and sketching. Occasional oral or written tests were conducted which covered subjects, Scripture verses, names and uses of the flowers, and the les-

sons taught. On the Sunday preceding the final test on all the stories, the children were given an oral review. Two public school teachers and the superintendent of the Sunday School prepared this final test and acted as judges. After the examination the Public Park Commissioner of the city addressed the children on the importance of cultivating flowers and trees in order to beautify the city and country. The Commissioner was so pleased with the plan of instruction involved in the stories that at the conclusion of the address he presented as awards to the children who had received the highest marks in the test, potted plants which he voluntarily offered to donate for the occasion.

The author is not outlining this plan as a model to be universally adopted, but relates it simply for what it may be worth. Modifications will readily suggest themselves. For example, it may be found undesirable to tell flower stories in a continuous series; in that event alternate months might be given to flowers, with other stories in between. Or April, May, and June of each year might be used, or perhaps the summer months, when the flowers are in bloom and can be picked. In localities where the flowers grow, children might gather them and bring them to church to use as object lessons while the stories are being told; in other places, the blackboard might be used for sketches by the minister, teacher, or pu-

pil. The younger children will find interesting and profitable hand-work in colouring the plates in the book with crayolas. A special index of suggested texts is given after the final story for the use of ministers in their Junior Congregation work.

Of course, no attempt has been made to tell a story of every wild plant. It has been the purpose of the author, however, to work into helpful stories for children the characteristics of many edible wild plants. A reading of the stories will make it plain, therefore, that no one need go hungry if lost in the woods and will further deepen an interest in the food value of many wild flowers now regarded by the average person as useless. Let it be kept in mind, however, that this little volume is neither a manual of botany nor a treatise on diatetics; it is a story-book for children.

It is earnestly hoped that children everywhere will receive much good from these stories, told not so much by the author as by the beautiful wild flowers themselves.

D. O. O.

The Corner-Stone Temple,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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I

THE COMMON DANDELION

Gold in Your Back-Yard

SOME foolish folks think God has buried all the gold in the earth, but He hasn't. He has spread some over the top of the earth, and it can be found in mostly any back-yard.

Children everywhere are acquainted with the little golden dandelion flower. What a queer name! When the French people first saw it, they said, "Dent de lion," which means, a lion's tooth. Its ragged leaves looked like a lion's tooth, so they called it dandelion. It grows anywhere, even in back-yards.

Dandelion will grow in rich soil, or in poor soil, and no matter where it grows, it always has the same strength as a tonic for the body. Gold is always the same, and it glistens as brightly for the poor as for the rich. Gold is gold everywhere. So the tonic of the dandelion plant is helpful to rich and poor alike.

It is so with Jesus, for He is just like gold wherever He is. He smiles as brightly for the poor as for the rich. He spreads His kindness

and His helpfulness everywhere. "He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Dandelion is eaten in many different ways. Some boil the leaves with lentils; others use both leaves and flowers as a salad. Some people do not like the bitter taste of dandelion, so they extract it by washing the plant through several waters, or by making it white. Making it white is called "Blanching," and this is done by heaping the earth up around the plant, just as the farmers do with celery.

Dandelion is a wonderful blood purifier, and the French and Dutch always eat it in the springtime. In our own fields and lots, children and grown folks can often be seen gathering this interesting plant.

In some communities the roots are roasted, and then ground, and used in place of coffee. On the banks of the Rhine River it is raised for this purpose. Doctors say it has the flavour of the best mocha coffee, without its harmful elements. Coffee taken at night will keep you awake, but dandelion will put you to sleep. The French slice the roots, and eat them with the leaves, on buttered bread. Others cut the roots into small pieces, dry them in an oven until brown and crisp, and eat them in that way. The roots should be taken up in the fall, washed, cut in pieces, and dried in the sun, then they will keep for years, and can be roasted at pleasure.

There is a bitter flaky-like substance in the root of the dandelion, which when taken for dyspepsia and liver troubles, will leave no injurious results to the body as other drugs often do. This little weed plant is also full of many mineral ingredients that build up the body. And it contains these ingredients wherever it grows, all over the civilized world. This is like gold—the same everywhere.

Many years ago, upon the island of Minorca, the locusts ate up all the crops. The people dug up the dandelion roots, ate them, and saved their lives.

Various animals also get food from this plant. Lambs that are weak and sickly soon recover their strength, if allowed to feed in a field where dandelion is in flower. That is why some people call dandelion, "Lamb's Lettuce."

In summer or in winter, dandelion may be found. Isn't that like gold? In all seasons and places, no matter how cold, or how hot, it is the same nourishing tonic and food. How like the Master that is. He can always be relied upon to be the same true Friend to every child, everywhere. In pleasure, in sorrow, in sickness, in health, Jesus is the same patient Helper.

But here is something wonderful about the dandelion—rats, field-mice, squirrels, rabbits, beavers, beetles and worms never gnaw at its roots or leaves. This permits it to bloom at a time of the year when fresh vegetable food is scarce. It looks

as if God desired to give His children a helpful tonic food in the early spring, when other food was difficult to get, so He preserved the dandelion from all destructive animals and bugs. Even bees gather honey from it in the early spring.

Isn't Jesus like that dandelion—a Friend to folks when other friends are scarce. Children, this is more than gold. Some day we will put gold under our feet, but friends will be loved more and more. And the dandelion in our back-yard tells us this story.

The leaves keep close to the ground, and each new set is formed on top of the older ones, yet the crown of the stem hugs the ground so tightly that a man can hardly kick it loose.

That is just exactly the way Jesus works in children's lives. He sets boys and girls so firmly in this world that rude and wicked men find it hard to take away their crowns. The Bible tells us that Jesus will not allow any man to pluck us out of His hand.

What fun we have chasing that balloon-like seed ball that grows out of the stem of the dandelion. We were told it could steal pennies from our pockets, and we were afraid, but by and by we took the dandelion, and with a deep breath, blew at the puff ball, then shouted,

"O dandelion, with globe of down
The schoolboy's clock in every town."

Dandelion stands the rough March winds because its stem is a hollow tube that holds from one to two hundred tiny blossoms, that stick closely to each other. Wonderful message, children. There are no gusts of evil or storms of trouble powerful enough to blow little children out of the Master's grip. And if all through life children will be true to each other, stick together, they will be as gold. Each Sunday School class, each congregation, each church will be like a nugget of gold.

As many as ninety-three varieties of insects have been noticed collecting food and honey from the dandelion. Why shouldn't so many seek a flower that is the same generous helper under all conditions of weather and living? Here again we are reminded of Jesus, for His life has something of help for every kind of child or grown up.

Why can't all little children be like that dandelion? Some call it a weed, but it is more valuable than a nugget of gold. If children will try to develop a noble, even disposition, and will always be ready to serve, surely God will never permit bugs and worms to destroy them. We need not fear the grave. Our bodies may return to dust, but no worm can touch our souls.

Fill the day full of kindness, truth, and love, no matter what the weather. "The same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

The Common Violet

Bathing the face with crushed violet and milk hides all pimples, and gives the skin a violet hue.

II

THE COMMON VIOLET

A New Suit of Clothes

WHEREVER the violet grows, it is a favourite. It makes everybody think of springtime, June and the robin's song. Yet by botanists it is classed as a common weed.

The violet is plentiful in every part of Europe and America. Children find it in lowlands, meadows, woods, marshes, and along the roadsides and banks of streams. Most of the flowers are a deep purple, but some are light blue, and others nearly white. The leaves grow on long stems from the base, and are usually heart shaped, with round, toothed edges.

In some countries of Europe, the peasant mothers make a syrup of violets, and give it to their children. Mohammedans make a drink from the violet, which they call violet sherbet. In parts of France the crushed violet is used in home-made remedies. In America we make a dainty candy with the violet flower, by dipping it in a syrup.

Violets have been used as medicines in cases of rheumatism, weak eyes, quinsy, sore throat, scorpion's sting, and some even used to believe it cured

cancer. Its present use in medicine is as a syrup for young children. Then it is also used in soaps and perfumes.

The people of Wales carry the violet to the graves of their loved ones. In parts of Italy the same thing is done, and the days set apart for decorating the graves are called "Violet Days."

When the Arabs wished to describe the eye of a beautiful woman, they likened it to a violet. The ancient Greeks had a queen goddess, and they always said that this goddess had violet-like eyelids. So Shakespeare speaks of

> "Violets dim
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes."

These ancient pagans tried to make their skin look like violet, by mixing the crushed flower with milk, and bathing their faces in the mixture. But these people were pagans, and how silly that millions of Christians should follow this vain habit of the pagans, by smearing their eyelids and noses with various violet powders and pastes. This is not wearing the violet colour as it should be worn.

This much loved flower has been put to so many uses that they cannot all be told here, for what we are most interested in is the use that was made of the violet colour in garments or robes. In olden times people who held high positions wore robes of violet colour, as violet has always been the emblem of royalty. Any one receiving a new robe, really

received a new suit of clothes, because the robe was the principal garment worn. The ancient Athenians made crowns of violets, and considered it an honour to be called violet crowned. The beautiful voilet hats of which many girls are so fond are perhaps taken from the old time violet crown.

When children are truthful and brave, we say they are princely, meaning, of course, that they act like a noble character. It is then that boys and girls are worthy to wear a violet robe, such as was given to men whom kings wished to honour.

Usually when children are to be dressed in a new suit of clothes, the question of fit is a serious one, because some children are so fat, and some are so skinny, some are so short, and some so tall. The skinny fellow must get a suit that will make him look stout, and the short fellow must get a suit that will make him look tall, and so on. Each must have a different sort of suit. But this suit, this new suit of clothes, which the Bible speaks of as a suit, or robe of violet, is one that will fit any child. An unusual suit, isn't it?

In the days when Ahasuerus was king of the Persian Empire, there was a Jewish servant in the palace whose name was Mordecai. One day some of the other servants were planning to kill the king. Mordecai overheard them, broke up their plans, and saved the king's life. In the palace there was another servant whose name was

Haman, and he was a very proud Persian. He had a much higher position than Mordecai. Every one bowed to Haman as he went in and out of the gate; but Mordecai, who was the gatekeeper, refused to bow down to him. For this refusal Haman became so angry at Mordecai that he influenced the king to give him permission to kill all the Jews in Persia. He forgot that the queen was Mordecai's cousin, and also of the Jews.

Upon hearing of Haman's murderous plan, Mordecai began to pray, and he asked Queen Esther, and all the Jews in the land to pray with him. That night the king could not sleep, so he called for the big book in which were written all the important things done in his kingdom. While reading through it, he noticed that no reward had ever been given to Mordecai for saving his life. The next day Queen Esther told the king all about Haman's plans to kill the Jews. This, together with some other things that Haman had done, enraged the king, and he ordered his servants to hang Haman on the very gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai.

But he called Mordecai before him, placed a ring on his finger, and gave him a robe of royal purple, then "Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of violet." Some men who write books which explain the meaning of Bible verses call it a robe of purple, but others call it a robe of violet.

What a beautiful new suit of clothes for Mordecai. In spite of the bitterness and power of Haman, Mordecai firmly believed God would save him and his fellow Jews. That is like the violet flower. It is so true to its colour and flavour that vinegar cannot fade or sour it. In fact, if the violet be dipped into vinegar quite often, its perfume will be preserved for a year or more. And wasn't Mordecai's trust in God something like that? All the bitterness and ugliness of Haman could not destroy it. Mordecai was worthy to wear violet.

By his loyalty to his people, the Jews, he saved their lives. The king honoured him with the new suit of clothes, a suit such as princely people wore, and God honoured him by making him a great man, for Mordecai was raised from the position of gate-keeper to that of prime minister to the king.

Children who lead others to Sunday School and to church are saving lives,—saving them from sin and death. Such children will receive a high place of honour and influence in the land. It will be as if they wore the robes of kings and princes. It will be the noble character that will cover them, like a new suit of clothes. And this suit will fit any child. Like the violet they will be loved by everybody, because their characters of truth and loyalty represent princely and noble living. Their character will be like a beautiful robe of violet.

Marsh Marigold

The leaves a nutritious food - cooked or pickled.

III

THE MARSH MARIGOLD

A Surprise Party

WHAT happiness a surprise party brings to boys and girls! How big we felt when we received our invitation, and were told to bring sugar, or lemons, or crackers, or perhaps peanuts. What fun on the way to the house! And when the honoured one walked into the parlour, how we shouted, "Surprise! Surprise!" Then the lights were turned on, and the games and fun began.

We are now invited to another surprise party, but of a very different sort. This time a little wild flower will surprise us.

Early in the springtime, there is a small flower that blooms in marshy ground, and along slow flowing streams, everywhere from Newfoundland to South Carolina, and as far west as Nebraska. It is called the marsh marigold. When Tennyson, a great English poet, saw it he said, "It shines like fire." The Indians gave it the name of "Onondaga," which means, "it blooms in the swamps."

It was once thought that marsh marigold was

poisonous. Those who still say so keep picking other flowers that look like marigold. Some people call the marigold "Cowslip," but it isn't the cowslip at all. Poor little plant! Shunned and despised as poisonous, and called by names that class it with the dangerous plants, just because people do not know any better. What a surprise some of these people must get when they discover that marigold is not poisonous.

The flower has no petals, but instead, from five to nine golden-yellow shining, under-petals, called sepals. In the center are many golden threads, still brighter than the sepals, and these are called stamens. The leaves are round or heart-shaped, and usually have a scallop edge. The stem is hollow and grooved.

Suppose we lost our way on some lonely country road. Tired and hungry, we sat down by a bed of marigold to die. We would not think of eating the marigold flowers to keep from starving, because we had heard they were poisonous. What a surprise we should get, if a passing stranger should tell us that we need not starve, for the marigold all about us was a real food that makes the body strong.

The leaves kept the Indians alive many a time, and we may eat them, too. They can be made into a salad, or eaten cooked. In some places marigold is pickled and sent to market. The Germans take the young flower buds, pickle them, and use them

for flavouring. What a surprise. A plant we were told to shun as poisonous, we suddenly discover to be a valuable food friend.

There are many little children like that. Some tell us they are so unruly and wicked they are like poison. But when we get to know them real well, to our surprise they are kind and gentle. We must carefully sift all the unkind remarks that come to our ears, because many times people do not really understand the child they are talking about.

There was a certain young lawyer defending an ignorant and lone woman. In the course of the case he spoke sharply to his opponent. The other lawyer then became angry, and said to him, "You are the nastiest and ugliest fellow I have ever dealt with." This was the first time they had met. The case lingered many months, and the two lawyers worked together very often after that. And one day the young attorney discovered a blunder through which his opponent might have lost hundreds of dollars. He quickly informed his opponent, and there was a little surprise party right then and there. The older lawyer took the young man by the hand. "I thank you, I thank you a thousand times," he said. "When I first met you, I thought you were the ugliest man I had ever tried to do business with, but forgive me, forgive me. Your kindness and honesty make you a noble youth indeed. I honour you."

What a surprise party when we meet a lad who

we think is full of poison, but whom on better acquaintance we find sweet and true, with no poison in him at all.

There are many in the world to-day who think Jesus is a hard, sharp Master. They think He is too particular. All wrong-doers think He is like poison. And some children think He is too strict. They think Jesus deprives them of fun. But what a surprise we get when we become better acquainted with Him and find Him to be gentle, loving, helpful, and forgiving. He does not take our fun away, but makes us happier than ever.

When Saul of Tarsus first heard of Jesus, he hated Him so bitterly that he wanted to kill all the Christians. While on his way to the ancient city of Damascus, with a permit that allowed him to kill the Christians, he was struck by a blaze of light that threw him to the ground, and Jesus spoke to him. He now saw how tender and lovable Jesus was, so he arose and decided to stand by Jesus. His name was now changed to Paul. Later, when he was praising Jesus he was arrested and brought before the king. He told the king how once he had hated Jesus, but how after studying His wonderful life, he had found Him to be the Friend of man, and the Saviour of the world.

What a surprise party for Paul. The Man he thought was the worst, turned out to be the best in all the world. He thought He was poison, but found He was helpful and strengthening,—like

marigold. At another time Jesus fell into the hands of a rough and mad mob. They could not find any witnesses against Him, so they hired a couple of men to swear that Jesus had committed certain wrongs, which they knew He had never committed at all. Pilate, the judge, made a thorough investigation of all that Jesus had said and done. He then stepped out before that crowd of haters, and said, " I find no fault in this Man."

Children who now think that Jesus is a little too strict, will get a wonderful surprise party if they, too, will give time and thought to the things Jesus has said and done. Boys and girls who now have no interest in Sunday School, or Junior Congregation, would meet with a happy surprise upon becoming better acquainted with Jesus.

Jesus desires that every child grow to be strong and pure. And because He will not let us do what we please, we sometimes shun Him. Why not begin now to study His plans and purposes for little children. He is not a hard taskmaster. He is a loving Friend.

Beautiful marsh marigold. They told us once it was poison, but we found it to be food,—good food. What a surprise.

Jack in the Pulpit

The root is white and mealy on the inside, and can be eaten as a turnip.

IV

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

The Little Minister

ON a kitchen chair stood little five-year-old Herbert, with four other chairs in a row before him. He was wildly waving his hands, pounding his fists, and shouting at the top of his voice. In stepped the visiting pastor, by surprise, and when Herbert spied him he jumped from the chair and scooted off to his mother.

"What is Herbert trying to do; imitate some crazy man?" asked the minister, as Herbert's mother appeared. She hesitated, but said finally, "No, Pastor, I must tell you, he is playing church, and he is imitating you." The pastor laughed. "Well," said he, "that is the first time I ever saw myself in action."

In moist woodland, anywhere from Canada to Florida, and westward to Kansas and Minnesota, there is a little flower, growing from ten inches to three feet high, that imitates the preacher so well it has been named "Jack-in-the-Pulpit."

The root of the plant is shaped like a turnip, and the Indians ate this; so it is sometimes called "Indian's Turnip." The root has no odour, but a

sharp burning taste, which it loses with age. The outside of the root is brownish gray, the inside white and mealy. Other names for this plant are wild pepper, devil's ear, swamp turnip, bog onion, and lords-and-ladies. We know it best as jack-in-the-pulpit.

Early in April and on into July, the quaint green and brownish purple hooded flowers of this preacher plant may be seen in the shady depths of the woods. Jack the preacher is represented by the spike that grows up in the center, while the large surrounding petal forms the pulpit. The flower is so shaped that it provides even a sounding board over the head of Jack.

The green spike in the center is called a spadix, and tiny flowers cluster about its base. The large encircling petal is called a spathe, and this is light green, striped with brown. The leaves are always in threes, egg-shaped, from three to six inches long, with one vein running parallel around the edge. Three leaflets form one leaf, and hang over the top of the pulpit, as if telling the subject of Jack's sermon, faith, hope and love.

In the vast woodland cathedral the message of jack-in-the-pulpit rings out as clear as the voice of a prophet. After the leaves wither, large clusters of bright berries remain. And that is the way it ought to be with every child who would like to help others. Long after childhood is past, the Christian life ought to be bearing fruit. God tells

us that "His Word shall not return unto Him void." So if we are faithful when young, much good will come out of our later years.

While God was making little ministers out of the wild woodland flower, He did not skip little children. He made all children to be His ministers. And, beautiful as the wild flower is, the child is much more so in the work of ministering and helping.

Little Samuel was only five years of age when his mother brought him to Eli, the minister of the church. She left him to be trained for the ministry, so Eli gave him an ephod to wear, that was a gown, such as ministers wore in those days; and every year his mother made him a new little mantle.

Samuel's first duties were to take care of the sacred candlesticks, and open the door of the church at sunrise. You see how even a child of five can be a little minister. Children can open and close the church doors softly, take good care of the hymn books, not tear them or draw funny pictures in them; they can be quiet through the service and attentive at all times. In doing this they will be little ministers.

There was a mother down on her knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. Her son, Richard, about ten years of age, just came in from school. He noticed that his mother was crying. Instantly he walked over to her side, put his little arms around

her neck, and simply said, "Don't cry, Mother." Richard's mother was a widow, and having neither food nor money in the house, she was almost exhausted. And, besides, she had to move out of those rooms in a few days, and did not know where to go. But, when little Richard came to her so tenderly, she braced up in a jiffy, and somehow there came to her mind that sweet hymn:

"God will take care of you,
Through every day,
O'er all the way;
God will take care of you."

Richard was a little minister that day. He now has grown old, and his body, like the leaves of old jack-in-the-pulpit, is withering away; but his kind deeds of ministering are left like a bunch of bright berries, even more beautiful than any jack-in-the-pulpit ever left.

One summer Sunday evening a minister noticed a mounted policeman,—boys call them "cops,"—looking in the church window during the services. The next day the policeman called to see the minister and told this story. "Pastor," he said, "last night I drew my horse up to the open window of the church to listen to the singing and the sermon. I began to think of my dear old mother, who always prayed so earnestly for me. I have been a very bad man, Pastor." By this time the policeman was weeping. "But," he continued with his

story, " that dear little twelve-year-old daughter of mine keeps begging me to be a Christian, and I must be one, that's all there is to it."

The stalwart policeman united with that church the following Sunday, and his life from that moment became a remarkable one. Dozens of men, women, and children were led into a Christian life through his personal efforts. Later he became the superintendent of a Sunday School, where he taught hundreds of boys and girls how to be good and true.

His twelve-year-old daughter, " Dotty," was the little minister who started all this wonderful work. The little child did minister.

What a preacher and minister jack-in-the-pulpit is. Big as life he stands in his pulpit in the wild woodland flower, and his sermons go thundering out from under that sounding board. Every little boy and girl is even more of a minister.

The Indian Cucumber-Root

Its flower is beautiful. Its root is both food and medicine, with a taste like that of cucumber.

V

THE INDIAN CUCUMBER-ROOT

Graves That Won't Stay Closed

FLOWERS are very much like children. Some are bold, vainly displaying their merits, as if they had heard admiring comment, and others seem to be forever trying to hide their virtues. The delicate pale pink of some flower petals seems like a blush on their cheeks.

Indian cucumber-root is one of those modest plants, because as it develops into usefulness, it tries to hide all its good deeds; but it "could not be hid." People discovered its value, and sought it.

This plant has real beauty and talent, yet it remains modest. We are not so much that way; we try to hide our bad deeds, but with vanity tell everybody of our good works. The Master did just the opposite. He was like the Indian cucumber-root. There was no wrong in His life to hide, but every time He did good, He tried to hush it up. One day He attempted to slip away from the crowds for a rest, but the people pleaded for His help. St. Mark says, "Jesus could not hide Himself." He could not be hid.

The beautiful little flowers of the Indian cucumber-root are not easy to find, because they nod under the upper leaves of the plant, where they try to hide. The tall, slender stem grows from one to three feet high. The root is very thick, lies horizontally in the ground, and tastes like a cucumber. The Indians ate it, and we use it to-day in preparing various medicines.

About midway on the stem, five to nine lance-shaped leaves grow out from the same joint in a circle. At the top there are three smaller similar leaves, and under these the flowers seek their hiding place.

From New Brunswick to Manitoba and southward to the Gulf, the Indian cucumber-root will be found flowering in rich woods, during May and June. Its beauty pleased so many, and its virtues healed so many, it could not be hid.

Children's lives are like that. Every child is beautiful and useful, but a child is mostly so when, like the Indian cucumber-root, having done a good deed, he tries to hide it deep in his own soul. Children who always tell the good they do soon lose their charms.

According to the fairy tale, long years ago there was a king who was known for his great wisdom. Every day at noon a large covered dish was set before him at dinner. One day after he left the table, the curious servant carried the dish to his own room, locked the door, then removed the

cover, and found there on that dish a white snake. He tasted it, and the instant it touched his tongue he heard strange whisperings, for the piece of white snake which he had eaten had given him power to understand the speech of animals and birds.

That very day the queen lost her ring, and this servant was accused of stealing it. He was allowed only twenty-four hours in which to get the ring. Bowed with sadness, he went out into the courtyard, and there he heard one duck say to another that he had swallowed a ring that morning. The servant seized the duck, and had it killed. When the cook was preparing it for roasting she found the ring in the duck's stomach.

The king felt grieved to think he had falsely accused his good servant, so he promised to grant him any favour he might ask. This servant was like the Indian cucumber-root, retiring and modest. He said, "O King, I do not wish honours, nor even high position. Just give me a horse and a little money. I wish to go away, and be alone."

The king quickly gave him all he had asked for, and the servant started on a journey to hide himself. He had not gone far when he saw three fish caught in the grass at the edge of a pond. Though no one was near to see him, he set the fish free. He heard them say, "We will often think of you, and some day you will be rewarded for having saved us." A little further on he heard a

voice coming up from the sand. It was the ant-king, who complained because horses trampled on thousands of ants, and crushed them without mercy. He immediately turned his horse aside, and the ant-king said, "We will remember you, and reward you." Still further in the forest, he heard three baby crows say, "We cannot fly, we shall die of hunger." He drew his dagger, killed his horse, and left it for the crows to eat. He heard the baby crows say, "We will remember you, and reward you some day."

Having no horse, he had to walk, and soon came to a town, where he learned that the king's daughter desired a husband. When he saw her, he found her so beautiful that he loved her. The king said, "If you do what I ask, you may have my daughter."

The king threw a gold ring into the sea, and said to the servant, "Fetch that ring to me." While the servant was standing there three little fish came toward him, and the middle one laid a mussel at his feet. He opened it, and there was the ring.

Then the king's daughter scattered ten sacks of grain over the grass. She allowed the servant until next day at sunrise to have it all picked up. He knew he could not do this, and being weary, fell asleep. While he slept, the ant-king, with thousands of ants, came, picked up every grain, and put them back into the bags.

Finally the king's daughter said, "You must bring me an apple from the tree of life." The servant did not even know where the tree grew; nevertheless he started to find it, and travelled until, all tired out, he lay under a tree to rest. He heard a rustling in the branches, and the golden apple fell into his hand.

The three crows then perched on his knee, and told him how they had heard of his trouble, and so they had flown across the sea, to the end of the world, where stands the tree of life, and had got the apple. The servant then became the prince of the land, yet at first he had wanted to be alone.

He thought he could hide his good deeds, but he couldn't. The graves in which he buried his kind acts as he went along through life, would not stay closed.

Children, we cannot hide our good deeds. God will bring them all out before others for His own use. But if we boast and brag of all the good we do, our vanity and pride will spoil it all. If, however, like the Indian cucumber-root, or better still, if like Jesus, we go about quietly and humbly doing our duty each day, we too shall find a crown, and become princes among men.

The Wood-Sorrel

The salt from the wood-sorrel is called "Salts-of-Lemon", and is fine for taking ink stains out of table cloths and linen.

VI

THE WOOD-SORREL

A World Where Three Make One

ALTHOUGH we all live on this earth, we live in different worlds. Some live in a world of play, and others in a world of work. Some live in a world of happiness, and others in a world of sorrow. Some live in a world of evil, but others live in a world of righteousness. The righteous world is the Christian world. It is in this Christian world that they teach us the example in which three make One.

The Great Teacher of the Christian life gives us a beautiful little wild flower that helps us to understand this peculiar problem. It is the wood-sorrel plant, that grows in cool and shady places, and over old stumps of trees, and often over the stubs of other plants. Because of this, some call it "Stubwort." When its flowers spring up, the cuckoo sings most, so some call it "Cuckoo's Meat." Others call it "Alleluia," because its white flowers appear between Easter and Whitsuntide. Very rarely are the flowers pink or purplish. The leaves fold down upon the stem in the evening, and remain firmly closed until next morning.

Wood-sorrel is believed by many to be the original Irish shamrock. At any rate, the "spooky-like" spots where it grows give to it an air of mystery.

In Ireland, and in this country as well, it is used as a food. The leaves contain a delicious acid juice, and are fine for salads. Just below each bulb root there is a mild, crisp, turnip-shaped root, which can also be eaten. The Russians soak the leaves in water, then add milk, making a cooling acid drink, useful in cases of fever. In parts of Europe and in America many people crush the leaves and make a very appetizing green sauce for cooked fish.

A salt is obtained from the wood-sorrel called "Salts of lemon." It is a mixture of oxalic acid with potash, and is one of the best things for taking ink-stains out of linen.

There is something strange about this plant, for every now and then it grows a leaf with four petals. They say whoever finds one of these will soon be married, or will soon know his best friend.

But others declare that the four-leaved wood-sorrel has charms. One man tells of a girl who when returning from milking the cows saw tiny fairies dancing on every mound of earth. Her playmates could see nothing, so they thought she was silly. The little girl insisted that she saw the fairies. When she reached home it was discovered that a four-leaved wood-sorrel had accidentally,

and unknown to her, fallen into her shoe. With this leaf in her shoe she could see the fairies. Children, find one, and put it in your shoe; see if it will make you see fairies,—folks say it will.

We are told that St. Patrick used the wood-sorrel to teach people that God, the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, were three Persons, yet One. The ancient Druid priests always respected this plant as an emblem of the mysterious Three in One.

Every Sabbath, in church, when Christians recite the Creed, they state their belief in the Trinity. Trinity is a big word for little folks, but now is a good time to learn its meaning. It simply means three in one, and when we speak of The Trinity, we refer to the Three Divine Persons in One—God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Some men say they cannot understand how God can be three Persons, yet only One. If Christians tarried long with these men, they, too, would soon become confused. These disputers are trying to reach God through their brains, and they can never do it. But, if we live in the Christian world, we shall find it easy to learn that Three make One.

Take a stroll into the woods. Forget the bickering brains. Aha! There it is! The little wood-sorrel plant. Pick it up and see how, in the form of its leaf, it shows us the First Person of the Trinity—God. It is composed of three leaves, yet

it is one leaf. Each leaflet is the same as the other, and all three form one leaf. So Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One.

Then wood-sorrel shows us the Trinity in the wonderful work it accomplishes. On trees that have not given out leaves or fruit for years, trees of which nothing is left but ragged old rotten stumps, right there, on such stumps, the wood-sorrel blossoms. These old stumps are like people whose repeated wrong-doings have made them useless. Yet, if they will trust in Christ, He will fill their lives with beauty, just as the wood-sorrel fills the old tree stump with its beauty.

In one of the large hospitals of New York City a minister stood at the bedside of a dying man, who, though once strong and powerful, was now pale and bony. The sick man looked up and said, "Pastor, I have been a worthless man. I have wasted my life. Do you think Christ will save me?" "Yes, indeed," answered the minister, "Christ will save all who come to Him, seeking forgiveness."

The dying man then smiled, and the minister said it seemed to him as if a great number of little wood-sorrel plants shot up all around that bed, singing "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Jesus saves!" Jesus reaches down to the rotted stumps and wrecks of men, and blossoms out of their penitent hearts, that is, He makes ugly, useless sinners into pleasant, useful men and women. Isn't that a

wonderful work? That is like the beautiful wood-sorrel that blossoms out of rotten old tree stumps.

Then do not forget that the "Salts of lemon" that takes ink-stains out of linen is from wood-sorrel. So the blood of Christ washes all the black sin stains out of our hearts, and makes us whiter than the snow. And He will do this for the worst wreck of a life. Here is where the wood-sorrel shows us the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ.

But in the way it ministers to man, wood-sorrel shows us the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

When Christ was about to leave this earth, He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send the Comforter to you." The Comforter is the Holy Spirit, whose counsel to the sinner is like a cooling drink from the Spring of Life to a fevered man. This is like the leaves of the wood-sorrel that nourish weak bodies. So the Comforter nourishes weak souls.

In all these ways God becomes the Restorer of Life. No wonder, then, that people look upon this little weed plant as it blooms over the top of a rotten old tree stump and say, "Alleluia."

The Yarrow or Milfoil

The leaves are wholesome eating when chopped fine and mixed with flaked peanuts.

VII

THE YARROW OR MILFOIL

Driving Out Devils

YARROW is one of those weeds that starts your imagination going, the instant its delicate, lace-like leaves and flower clusters appear.

So many interesting things are told about this plant it seems as if it must grow in some fairy-land; yet here it is, peeping up out of the lawns, meadows, pastures, by the side of dusty roads, and by watery banks. It grows from six to eighteen inches high.

The stem is simple or forked near the top, gray-green in colour, and stocky. At the top of this stem the flowers are bunched in clusters. Short, tube-shaped, yellowish florets make up the center of each flower, and as these grow older, they turn grayish, or brown in colour. Around these centers there are from four to six white petals. The leaves are soft and feathery, and alternate along the stem.

Out by the side of the dusty road, where nearly every other plant dies, this sturdy yarrow plant will thrive. It is easily recognized, because of the strong, spicy odour that comes from its leaves.

Some people would call it a straggling tramp flower, lounging along the highways of the country, but it is really a food and tonic. In early spring, before the leaves are five inches tall, they make a wholesome salad, or can be eaten, chopped fine, and mixed with an equal weight of flaked peanuts.

Many years ago some people in England considered it a cure for distempers. Others chewed it to cure toothache. Still others rubbed it on their scalps, to keep from becoming bald-headed.

To this day it is eaten, and also used in medicines. How generous God is to put so much good in a common highway weed.

People in Scotland and England say that if you place a bunch of yarrow under your pillow, in midsummer, your best friend through life will appear in a dream. Among the people of England this verse is still quoted:

"Thou pretty herb of Venus tree
Thy true name is yarrow,
Now who my dearest friend shall be
Pray tell thou me to-morrow."

Doesn't that sound like a plant from fairy-land?

Some people in England and America called it "Devil's Nettle," because they said that by using it a person could discover lost or hidden articles, and could tell fortunes.

But when a Christian sees the yarrow plant, and considers all its good qualities, he thinks of Christ.

There is its claim to cure distempers, and then again its power over devils. It may be that these powers are only imaginary, nevertheless, the very sight of yarrow reminds us that the plant holds these claims. So yarrow reminds the Christian of Jesus, Who really can cure distempers, and Who really has power over devils.

There was a lad who had a very bad temper, and one day the evil spirit put it into his mind to stab his brother. The boy did it, but fortunately the wound was not serious. Later Jesus came into that bad boy's heart, and threw out the evil spirits, the devils. Jesus always drives out evils from the hearts of children who make Him their Friend. He always urges us to do good deeds, and is like a tonic to persons who have weak wills.

Yarrow lives by the side of the dusty road where nearly everything else will die. Does not this make us think of Christ, Who survives and holds out where every one else would die?

One day Jesus came upon a road where two wild young men lived, who were filled with evil spirits. No one else could live near them; no one else even dared to pass that way. But Jesus came along that dusty road, in the land of the Gergesenes, and like the yarrow plant, He thrived there. His beauty of character and power showed up plainly there.

As He walked up that road, the devils came flying at Him, but, recognizing Him, they cried out, "Have you come to kill us before our time is up?" They knew Jesus would do something with them, so they begged to be sent into a herd of swine near by. Jesus said to those devils, "Go!" and they went.

The poor pigs went mad, rushed into the sea, and perished. Jesus has real power over devils, and it is always safe for children to call upon Him for help.

As the flower of the yarrow grows up out of a soft feathery leaf, so this power of Christ's comes out of a soft and easy manner.

When the Indians went out against their foes, they smeared themselves with streaks of different coloured paints, then danced wildly about, and screamed out their war yells; and when the Chinese went into battle, they stuck huge, hideous false faces on the top of long poles, and ran out against the enemy. This they did, thinking they would frighten those who fought against them.

Jesus does not screech war yells, nor paste Himself up with war paints, nor does He use false faces. He simply stands in an easy and quiet, but firm manner, and says to the devils, "Go," and they go.

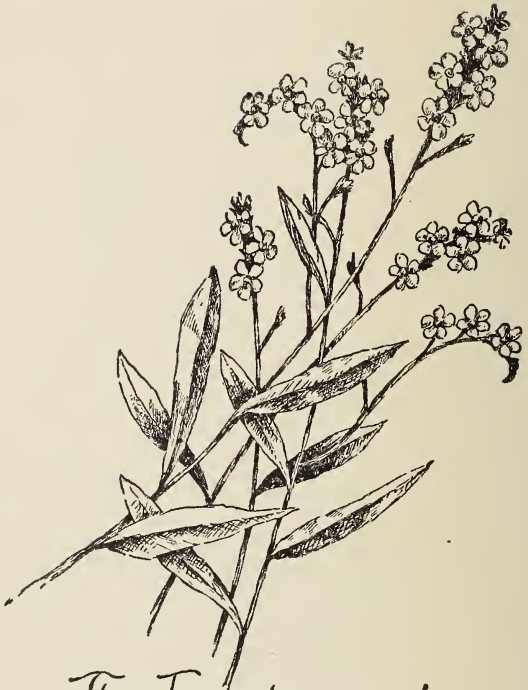
As softly and gracefully as notes come from a harp, does Jesus work His great works. The Bible tells us that King Saul would often be-

come seized with evil spirits. He would rage, and swear, and tear about like a lunatic. It was one of David's duties to calm the king at such times. But David did not leap upon the king's neck, or grab him by the throat, throw him to the ground, plant his foot on the king's breast, and then shout, "You be good and quiet!" Had David done this, he never would have calmed the king.

Instead, young David ran for his harp, and gracefully moved his fingers over the strings, filling the room with music. The instant the soft, sweet notes reached the ears of the king, he was calmed, and the evil spirits departed. This is just the way Jesus works. As easily and tenderly as sweet notes from the harp, does Jesus approach the devils. He then says, "Go," and they go.

To sit on the stump of an old basswood tree, by the side of the dusty road, and there talk for a while with the yarrow plant, is like taking a trip to fairy-land, or better still, like a visit to some cathedral where mighty sermons are preached.

In such a conversation children will learn from the yarrow plant to do their duty, quietly and bravely, and without frantic boasts. They will learn to do acts of kindness in the hard dusty places of life. Oh, that all little boys and girls were like the yarrow plant!



The For̊get-me-not

The universal emblem of friendship.

VIII

THE FORGET-ME-NOT

Having Supper With a Friend

FRIENDS are more precious than jewels, and it takes time to make real friends.

The dainty forget-me-not flower is the emblem of friendship all over the world. Its beautiful blue colour stands for faithfulness. Of a faithful friend we say, "Yes, he is true blue, he is."

In Europe, Asia, Nova Scotia, New England, New York and all through the southern part of America the little, common, wild forget-me-not is at home. It is not a showy plant, but like real friendship is humble. Its stem is rather stout and smooth, but weak. Its leaves are rough and fuzzy. The whole plant does not grow more than twelve inches high.

The stems curve at the ends, and on one side of the curved ends the flowers blossom in clusters. Each flower has five sky-blue petals, with a yellow center. The buds are pink. Children will stumble across it while roaming beside brooks, rivers, ponds, stagnant ditches, and little tiny rivulets. When cultivated it produces a much larger flower.

And in this it is again like real friendship. If we respect and love our friends, that is, cultivate our friendships, they will give us more and more of their loveliness, just as the cultivated forget-me-not does.

Gather the blossom stalks regularly, and it will continue in bloom throughout the entire summer.

'Way down in the Nile valley, and even out in the desert, the forget-me-not grows, and the Egyptians in that locality believe that the juice strengthens the eyesight.

It is not only beautiful to look upon, but is also valuable as a food. Here is a flower that is at once beautiful and useful. There are some people in this country who prepare the flowers and leaves of the forget-me-not into a very "tasty" salad.

Then where did that sweet name hail from? No one knows who first called it forget-me-not. Some people called it mouse-ear, because the downy leaf seemed like the ear of a mouse. The Welsh people have a beautiful name for it. They call it "Christ's Eye," because of its clear true-blue colour.

Here is another story about its name. A young man and woman were walking one day along the banks of the Rhine River, in Germany. Suddenly they looked across the river, and out on an island they noticed millions of beautiful little blue flowers. The young man, eager to pick a bunch of these flowers for his sweetheart, plunged into

the river and swam for the island. He reached it, picked the flowers, and was returning, holding the bunch in one hand above water. As he neared the spot where the lady was waiting for him he was caught in a swift current. He knew he could not reach her and that he would be dragged down under the stream by that sweeping current, so he tossed the flowers to her, shouting several times, "Vergiss - mein - nicht! Vergiss - mein - nicht!" These words mean, "forget-me-not, forget-me-not."

Some say that ever since that time the little blue flower has been called forget-me-not. And as the emblem of friendship it has been stamped on jewelry and a thousand and one other things.

When we stop to think that the flower is the gift of God, in His work of creation, the friendship it symbolizes is not so much that which exists between men, but rather that deeper and holier friendship which exists between Christ and His people. The forget-me-not is more likely to make us think of—

"What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer."

In all Christian churches there is a service which many consider to be the most beautiful. The Church calls it the Communion Service, or the

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Let us call it the Forget-Me-Not service.

There is a hymn we sometimes sing which describes heaven as being located on the opposite shore of a river. It reads like this:

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie."

For millions of years, so many millions no one can count them, Jesus dwelt on that opposite shore. Looking upon this old world that floated like a huge island in a stream, He saw children growing up beautifully, then suddenly wither and die in sins that swept over their lives like hot, scorching blasts. He planned to visit this world, and pluck these children with His own hand, and carry them back to God.

He came, and the story of His coming we repeat every Christmas time. He gathered a small group of people together and in His tender way taught and trained them. A little later He knew He would have to surrender His life for the children He came to pick for God. So He invited His friends or disciples to meet with Him, and at this meeting He explained how He would be crucified, but assured them He would arise out of the grave, and thus conquer death.

Supper was served at the meeting, and it is

often referred to as the Last Supper. As Jesus handed His disciples bread to eat, and wine to drink, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." That is, "Forget-Me-not, forget-Me-not." In other words, He said, "After I am gone, see that My people meet with each other frequently, at a little supper like this. As often as they eat the bread, let them think of My body, which I have offered in suffering, to save them from death; and as often as they drink the wine, let them think of My blood, which I have shed for their purifying and redemption. Let them forget-Me-not."

Now everything happened just as Jesus explained it, for shortly after this He was crucified, and it was as if some mighty current swept Him on to death. Immediately before His death, He tossed all His children up toward God; that is, He gave them into God's care. Not until He had placed every child, and that includes us, safely into His Father's hands, did He die. Then He did arise, so that all who believed on Him should also arise from the grave, and live with Him forever on that other shore, the heavenly shore.

Oh, little forget-me-not! Wonderful symbol of friendship. True blue in every petal, then down in the heart center, some say yellow, let us say—gold.

The Common Plantain

The leaves soothe insect stings - young leaves good eating.

IX

THE COMMON PLANTAIN

The Spike that Bloomed

WHOEVER heard of flowers growing out of a spike? Well, if you will look in many an ill-kept dooryard and vacant lot, you will see a plant called "Common Plantain," and its flowers grow out of a spike.

The flowers bloom one after the other, from the bottom of the spike to the top, so that only a few, and not the entire spike of flowers, are in bloom at one time. The lowest flowers often wither and die while the middle flowers are still in bloom. The tiny white flowers open in circles around the long spike head, and keep growing from June until September. The large, spreading leaves of this weed plant spread out from the root.

Here, then, we have the spike that blooms.

The seeds of the common plantain are carried by the wind, because it has no bright colours, such as attract various insects.

This is by no means the only spike God has made to bloom. Many years ago, God told Moses to take several rods, or wands, one of which be-

longed to Aaron, his brother, and place them in a certain tent. Moses did as he was told, and the next morning when he went to look at them he found that Aaron's rod, or spike, had budded, and that flowers had grown out of the rod. Moses knew by this sign that God wished to make Aaron a minister to serve the children of Israel, while they were journeying through the wilderness.

So we must not snub this common weed plant with the spike that blooms, for in it we shall find how thoughtful and kind God is to His people.

There are people in different parts of Europe, and once in a while we meet some in America also, who believe that flowers have souls. For this reason they will not pick them, but let them die on their stems, because they believe the soul of the plant will depart to meet its own kind in plant heaven. Plantain loves so much to be near man, we might well believe it has a soul. It seems to follow man everywhere. The thorn-apple tracked the Gypsies out of Asia into all parts of Europe. And so closely has the plantain tracked the white man that the sharp-witted North American Indian calls it "The footstep of the White." Some named it "Plantago" because the form of the leaf resembles the sole of the human foot. Others say it was so named because of its fondness for the edges of paths and roads, forever seeking human society, and haunting the travels of man.

It humbly offers its leaves as a salve for bruises,

burns, cuts, or sores, which a traveller might have received on the road. It is therefore called the "healing plant." There is a German story that once a young girl, watching by the wayside for her lover, was changed into a weed by magic, yet so true was her love, that even now as a weed she watches, out of the common plantain plant.

But plantain is also very good to eat. The young leaves are "tasty" when chopped and mixed with nuts and honey. People say it is a weed; nevertheless it is a food that grows freely at their very door-steps.

One species is excellent for sheep and cattle. Another variety grows seeds covered with a sticky coating, and manufacturers use it for stiffening the finer kind of linen. It is also used for making paper. The fresh leaves, rubbed on parts of the body stung by insects and nettles, will soothe the irritation. What wonders behind this spike that blooms! A great scientist once called it a degenerate flower; and others call it a persistent intruder; but those who know it better call it "wound-weed." With our world all upset by labour difficulties, and social problems, plantain still follows in the footsteps of man. It follows with a song, and this is the song, "The leaves are for the healing of the nations."

When you look at plantain, you cannot help saying what Moses said when he saw the burning bush, "I will now turn aside and see this great

sight." Once I walked smack into a spider's web that had been stretched across the road. That old genius of a spider seemed to know just how high my mouth was from the ground, for that was where I caught it. And I almost went crazy, spitting and brushing, trying to get rid of that web. Some have stopped to see the great sight of the web and have learned marvels from it. To thousands a spider's web seems like a useless old spike—something that harms and does not help. Yet one day Samuel Brown, the great engineer, weary from trying to plan a bridge across the Tweed River, went out into his garden, and soon came face to face with a spider's web. He raised his hand and was about to brush it madly away, but changed his mind. Instead, he stood there, studying the work of that spider. He saw how the spider held the main cord of the web, with threads that hung down from a drooping cable of network, and he quickly rushed back into his study and sketched the suspended spider's web on paper. Then he made one with ropes. And out of that spider's web grew the Brooklyn Bridge.

When constructed, it was the greatest suspension bridge in the world. Thirteen years in building, with its span more than a mile in length, its towers two hundred and seventy-eight feet above high water, this wonder of engineering work grew out of a spider's web. The web was like an ugly spike that seemed useless; the Brooklyn Bridge,

still considered the most beautiful of them all, was the flower that was found when the spike was examined. Behold, the rod,—the web,—bloomed.

To the Samaritans the Jews were like ugly spikes. When Jesus went one day into Samaria, He met a woman by a well, and asked her for a drink of water. She said, "What, you a Jew, and ask me for water?" Then Jesus spoke tenderly to her, yet told her the secrets of her life. He also told her many beautiful things. She was amazed, and no longer did she see in Him a hated Jew—an ugly spike; because hid all about Him were beautiful words and kind thoughts that seemed like delicate flowers. Surely Jesus must have appeared to that woman like a rod that bloomed.

Like the plantain, Jesus haunts the track of man. He is ever near to give out His healing virtues to weary souls. Jesus may seem at times like a hard taskmaster, or without beauty, like a spike, uncomely and sharp; but, on closer study, He becomes the healing salve for all the wounds sin has put upon man while travelling the road of life.

Some say of Jesus, "There is no beauty in Him, that we should desire Him." Remember plantain looks like an ugly spike, and hasn't even one attractive colour that might draw insects to it; but it is food, medicine, and life. It is so with Christ.

Samson took honey out of the lion's carcass, and here we are taking flowers out of a spike.

The
Alfalfa Flowers

This plant is easily digested, and it will fatten a boy as quickly as it will a cow.

X

THE ALFALFA FLOWERS

Getting a Good Grip

FLOWERS may seem to be very flimsy things, blossoming in the morning and withering at sundown. But, even admitting this to be so with the flower, the message it leaves is as lasting as fern impressions in slate rock.

Many, many years ago, when coal was being formed in the earth, ferns and flowers fell upon the soft surface soil, and after a little while were covered over with deposits of sand and mud. The soft soil and mud hardened into slate rock through the centuries, and now, though thousands of years have passed by, miners dig out large pieces of slate stone which bear perfect imprints of those ferns and flowers. These impressions are so perfect that under a magnifying glass every tiny vein and formation of the ferns and flowers can be plainly seen.

If we will let God's ways, and teachings, and love, make a deep impression in our natures, then we shall be rooted and grounded in the love of God, and even though crushed like the fern, under

the weight of a world, we shall not be destroyed, but, instead, the finest lines of our characters will become clearer.

In waste places, and in fields almost anywhere, we find the alfalfa flower growing wild. It will grow in sandy and stony soil, where it is impossible to raise a crop of hay. The roots go down deep into the sub-soil, and therefore take up mineral elements that many other plants cannot reach. That is why this flower contains albumen, which builds the tissues of the body, fibrine, which makes a perfect blood, calcium, which makes bones and teeth, sulphur, which makes hair, nails and skin, iron, which burns up all impurities in the blood, sodium, which keeps away poisonous acids, and potassium, which makes the muscles solid. What marvellous food God has stored in the simple leaves and flowers of this deep rooted plant.

The flowers are a pretty purple, and grow in clusters at the end of slender branches. Each leaf is made up of three smaller, narrow leaves, with three very narrow leaflets at their base. The plant grows from one to two feet high.

Alfalfa flowers are fattening; therefore the "skinny" boy or girl ought to eat plenty of them. They will fatten a boy as quickly as they will a cow. It is an easily digested food for cattle and man alike.

Many years ago the society ladies in Media ate these flowers to keep their beauty. Some people

in America mix the flowers with salad herbs and leaves, to give the salad a delicious flavour. It is also good to calm excited nerves.

Alfalfa is not fickle, but teaches the lesson of depth and resoluteness. It teaches us not to complain of our lot in life, but to make the best of what we have. If we seem to be living where everything goes against us, as if we were planted in sandy, stony soil, then let us send our determination deep into every opportunity, just as the alfalfa sends its roots deep into the sub-soil, and we shall soon find our reward.

Abraham Lincoln, when a child, did not refuse to read or study, just because he had no electric light, but he made the best use of what he had, which was the flame from the large open fireplace, and so he won.

Bible history tells us of another Abraham, who made the best use of what he had. He was the founder of the Israelitish race, so the Israelites call him "Father Abraham." One day his servants quarrelled with his nephew's servants. There did not seem to be enough land to furnish grass and grain for the cattle of both.

When Abraham heard of the dispute between the servants, he went to Lot, his nephew, and said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren." Abraham then told Lot to take his choice of the land. Lot, of course,

selected the rich and fertile valley that was watered by the river Jordan, and Abraham took what was left, which was nothing but the stony slopes of Bethel.

Lot must have thought that his uncle was crazy to give up that fine fertile valley, but the valley led down toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—very wicked places.

Lot could not understand why his uncle was willing to take the stony hillside. The Apostle Paul tells us that if we are "rooted and grounded in the love of God," we shall be able to comprehend. Comprehend is a big word for little folks; but, as little folks will soon become big, they must become acquainted with some big words, and comprehend simply means understand. Lot could not understand, because he did not love God with all his heart; he loved pleasure and riches more.

Abraham was like the alfalfa plant, rooted deep in faith and love. He knew God could make plenty of grass and grain grow even on stony ground. Like the alfalfa, then, Abraham did his best in the stony soil, and God blessed him. His cattle and servants found more than enough on the stony hillside. The alfalfa will grow in good soil, but give it the stony soil and it will do its best. It digs deep and takes a good grip, and that is why it wins.

Lot was a shallow-minded youth, and though in possession of the better land, he soon became en-

tangled in the evils of Sodom and Gomorrah, and very nearly lost everything he had.

But Abraham was rooted deeply in God's love, and as a result he grew richer and richer on the stony soil. Only God's faithful children can understand how God does this.

That dainty little purple alfalfa flower, that often gives three crops in one season, and is so rich in food value, gives us a hint of the secret of its strength. It is deep-rooted, and it does not faint if the soil is dry and stony—it makes the best of it—it works its way down deeper and deeper with its roots, until it finds the best nourishment of the sub-soil.

Oh, if children everywhere would just take a firm hold upon God's love and truth, they would be able to comprehend, understand, what God plans for them. They would know how to make the most out of every hard place in life, and would soon find success. Rich and nourishing fruit would grow up out of all their disappointments, sorrows, hindrances and even poverty.

Yes, little Alfalfa Flower, you may seem like something that blossoms in the morning and dies at night, but you have made an impression upon me that will last as long as my soul lasts.

The Water Lily

The petals make a fine sandwich with bread or cookies.
The seed pods are collected for winter food by the Indians.

XI

THE WATER LILY

Feeding the Wanderer

CHILDREN and adults alike are attracted to the pure white water lily. The four leaves underneath, greenish outside and whitish inside, holding so many pure, waxy-white petals, make a flower of rare beauty.

It can be found from June until September, in ponds, lakes, and where water is either still, or slow-moving. The large flat leaves float gracefully like little rafts on the water top. In this same flower family there is the yellow pond lily, often called the cow lily.

There are some people in the United States who claim that ninety-five per cent. of the indigestion suffered is due to the eating of cooked foods. They have formed a society in which all the members agree to eat only natural foods; that is, they agree not to cook anything. So they eat potatoes, beets and all other vegetables raw. They eat only natural foods, which, they say, are grains, nuts, crisp herbs, roots, sweet fruits and water. These folks make a salad of the water lily petals by mixing them with grated cocoanut, or flaked

pignolia nuts, and often eat the petals without the nuts mixed.

Not long ago something happened in the mountains of upper New York State. The tale is worth listening to, for it may teach us how to save our own lives some day. The mountains are known as the Adirondacks, and the deer hunters and raccoon trappers find these woods full of their game.

Some people roam through these mountains to see the wonderful beaver dams, or to hike over the trails. There are no streets with sign posts to direct the hiker or hunter. Very often the trail is barely visible, being covered with fallen leaves, and strewn with rotten trees. This causes people to lose their way, and when any one is lost in the mountains it is a serious matter.

There are no policemen to direct you. There are no houses within reach, where you might get food, or sleeping room. You just have to sleep out-of-doors, as the Master did many times. But Jesus was never harmed while resting in mountain wilds, because God protected Him, and this promise of protection is given to every one who trusts God. God will keep us, even as He kept Jesus, for He tells us He "will never leave" us, "nor forsake" us. We may lose our trail in the high, wild mountain, but we can never lose God.

One morning at about half-past four, Harold Wingate started from his bungalow, beside Lake

Twitchell, determined to make the trail to a place called Wood's Landing. He was not long getting into his little guide-boat and paddling across the lake to the beginning of the trail. He took with him six slices of buttered bread and some cookies, enough for one day. Reaching the other side of the lake, he slung his guide-boat over his shoulders and began the hike.

After walking for more than three hours he discovered that he had lost his trail. He searched for marks on trees or rocks that might lead him to another trail, but night came on and he decided to stay right where he was. He built and lighted a fire, knelt and said his prayers, asking God to care for him through the night, then turned his boat upside down, crawled under it, and went to sleep.

Morning soon came and hundreds of unseen birds were chirping a bright song of hope to Harold Wingate. He came out from under his boat, knelt again in prayer, and thanked God for protecting him through a dark and lonely night in the wild woodland.

With fresh energy he now took up his search for a trail, and was not long finding one. This new trail led him to a lake, where he rested a while. He was very hungry but had only six cookies left. He had no tackle with which to catch fish, nor gun with which to shoot game. What was he to do?

Harold remembered his father's telling him

about the meals the Indians used to make from the roots, weeds and wild flowers. His father long since had told him that the beautiful waxy water lily was not merely a wild waste flower, growing to fill up space, but that God had planted the lily in the mountain lakes to keep wanderers and lone hikers from starving to death. He remembered that the seed pods of the water lily were an important article of food to the Indians, who collected them in large quantities and kept them for winter use. He remembered also that the petals of the lilies were fine food. He knew that many of those mountain lakes grew patches of water lilies, so he launched his boat and was out among some in a jiffy.

He plucked a tiny heap of water lily petals, and placed them between two cookies. Think of it—a water lily sandwich,—and he did relish it.

Finishing up his sandwich, he gathered more petals, put them into his kit, then paddled on across the lake.

It was about ten o'clock at night when Harold stumbled into his bungalow, weary, but happy. He had been away two days and his family had just arranged to send out a searching party to hunt for him.

His family were all eager to hear of his experiences, but Harold was most interested in the water lily sandwiches. Three water lily sandwiches were all he had eaten that day, and they

had sufficiently sustained him for his wearisome trip.

He told them how he had remembered father's stories about the Indians feeding upon water lilies, and so he tried it. But said he, "Folks, while I was eating those water lily petals I somehow thought of the sustaining power of Christ, and there came to my mind that verse in the Bible, which some interpret as relating to Christ, "I am the Lily!"

As Harold was being sustained by the nutrition of the water lily petals, he could not help thinking of the virtue and strength in Christ that sustains children when they are lost, or in dangerous places, for when a child trusts in Christ he can go through a great deal of hardship.

Christ sustains boys and girls in their wanderings. He will not let them die, but instead puts them on the trail that leads to nutritious food, and He gives strength to them all along the journey of life.

A wild weed flower, yes, that is what some say, and it may be so, but with it all, it is a treasure from God to the weary, foot-sore traveller who has lost his trail.

The Swamp Honeysuckle

When young, it bears a bud, called the May or Swamp Apple, which is relished by country children..

XII

THE SWAMP HONEYSUCKLE

Training Time

IN most swamps there is a beautiful flower that by its blossom and fruitage reminds children of the best time in which to train themselves for a useful life.

God did say to some, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise." But here He seems to say to children, "Go to the swamp honeysuckle, or white azalea, as it is often called, consider her ways, and be wise."

This shrub grows handsome, fragrant, white flowers, which bloom in great numbers, in low, wet swamps, during June and July. In rare cases the flowers are tinged with pink. It is a very branchy bush, growing from three to eight feet in height.

The country lads watch this plant in its early bloom, because at that time it grows something like a bud, that is pulpy and juicy, and this bud-like fruit is known as a May, or swamp apple. At one time people thought these were fungus growths caused by insects. All the way from Maine to Ohio, and southward, the children enjoy

eating these swamp apples. Again, in the swamp, where we would hardly expect to find any good thing, God has set up a table covered with goodies for the wanderer to eat.

Consider this swamp honeysuckle, and it will soon be discovered that the best training time for any business, calling, or profession in life, is in childhood. Many boys and girls treat their childhood with indifference, and when they grow up they are untrained—unfit for responsibility.

Parents often handicap a child in the Christian life, by insisting that their church training come later, in young manhood and womanhood. But time flies on, other attractions switch the child from church, and before it can be realized the child has become a man or woman without Christian training. Consider the swamp honeysuckle.

The early days of the flower are the days when the food bulbs form. So in the early days of all child life, character and habits find their formation, that remains through all later years. An ugly child will most likely be an ugly man or woman. A sweet child will most likely be a sweet personality all through life. The early days are the pliable days, the impressionable days; they are the days for child training.

Josiah was a boy only eight years of age when he became king of Judah. He was anxious to be a good and wise king, because the people were very

sinful. So he began in childhood to prepare his character and mind for the work of ruling, and he began by seeking after God. At twenty he was very familiar with the Word of God, and encouraged the reading of it in the Temple. He threw out from Judah all images, put a stop to idolatry, and persuaded the people to read the Bible, or as much of it as was then known. The Bible says he was one who "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord."

But, let us remember that while Josiah was yet young, in early childhood, he prepared for this noble work by seeking after the Lord. Josiah in Judah was like a sweet honeysuckle in a swamp.

What terrible wild men Cannibals were. Why, they would seize the missionaries who went to civilize and Christianize them, stew them over a large fire, and then feast on the boiled or roasted human flesh. What a dismal, swamp-like life the Cannibal lived.

About the year 1866 Dr. John G. Paton went to the Aniwa Island, in the New Hebrides, east of Australia, and there he found some of these savage Cannibals. He knew that on the islands in the Coral Sea and South Pacific Ocean, many other missionaries had been eaten by the savages, yet he went to them.

At first the Cannibals fought Dr. Paton, but a little later they permitted him to build his house on a hill where the bones of the other victims of

Cannibal feasts had been thrown. This was a spot sacred to the Cannibal gods, and it was the hope of the savages that the gods would destroy Dr. Paton. But when the wild human flesh eaters saw that no harm came to him they were willing to listen to his story about a God Who was stronger than their idol gods.

In a couple of years Dr. Paton built a church there, and soon the entire population was Christianized. What a change! The life of the savage—a swamp life, filled with filthy habits,—made as sweet as the swamp honeysuckle, because away back there in childhood little Johnny Paton trained to serve God and man.

The secret of that gentle and sweet nature that bubbled out of Dr. Paton's manner was in his childhood training. His parents knew well that the best training time for a child is when the child is young.

They encouraged John to become a Christian while still a child. His mother was a woman of strong faith. One day the meal barrel was empty, and they were too poor to buy more. John's mother said, "Do not worry, children, I have told God our need, and He will care for us." Within a few hours a bag of potatoes came from Mrs. Paton's father. Little John said he never forgot this lesson, and he declared afterward that it had a lasting effect on his religious life.

He was only a child when he determined to be-

come a missionary. So after years of hard work and reading, he completed his studies in medicine and theology.

This early training fitted him for his hard trials among the savages. Having been led by prayerful parents in his childhood, he learned well the power of prayer. And, when he came to the swamp-life of Cannibals, he was able to grow up among them, as a swamp honeysuckle grows up in a filthy swamp. His service to the Cannibals seemed just as if he were giving out to them hundreds of sweet, juicy May apples all the time, for he never lost an opportunity to fill their minds with the beautiful and helpful Word of God.

It was early training that made John G. Paton a successful missionary to the wild savages of the Coral Sea Islands. It was early training that made it possible for him to become known as "The man who conquered the Cannibals."

Go to the swamp honeysuckle, thou waster of thy young days, consider her ways, and be wise.

The
Arrow-Leaf

The Chinese and Indians find food in this plant.
The root is like a small potato, and good eating.

XIII

THE ARROW LEAF OR ARROW-HEAD

Shooting Arrows

ONE of the first playthings a lad makes for himself is a bow and arrow. An old barrel hoop and some staves furnish the material. Tin cans on boxes or fences furnish the targets, and sometimes the children play "Indians."

The Bible tells us many interesting stories about shooting arrows. One is of how Jonathan talked to David by shooting arrows to him. Three arrows shot into the woods told David that Jonathan's father, the king, was very angry, and it would not be safe for David to return to the house. So they talked by shooting arrows.

God shoots arrows down to us, and we can shoot arrows up to Him.

There is a plant called arrow leaf that grows in most parts of our country, on muddy shores, and that flowers in June. The flowers are white, have three petals, and grow in circles of three around the stem. The leaf looks just like an arrow. Some say it is the most beautiful of water plants.

God talks to men with this arrow-head plant. He told men that life and not death was to be found in it, but men made arrow-heads and put death into them. God put life into His.

The Indians and Chinese found food and life in this plant, and some tribes ate the root by boiling or roasting it. The root is usually like a small potato, yet some grow as large as a man's fist. Millions in Europe feed upon it, and in America the Indians eat it freely.

See how ungrateful men are. After getting all this good food and life out of the arrow-head plant, they used it as a pattern for stone arrows, which they dipped in poison and then shot into other men's bodies. God wants little children to shoot arrows, but not the arrows that kill.

The Psalmist, David, was surrounded by enemies, and he cried out, "Oh God, shoot out thine arrows, and discomfit them." So God has given us arrows to shoot every time our enemies come near, but they are arrows that will not kill; they only discomfit or perplex the enemy.

As all children know, an arrow has three points, and, by the way, each arrow leaf has three points, each flower has three petals, and the flowers grow out of the stems in threes. And this reminds us that God has three wonderful arrows for children to set in their bows, every time the enemy comes near. The Quiver in which these arrows can be found is the Bible. It is a Quiver children can

always carry with them. Soldier boys carried it on the battle-field. Missionaries carry it when they go out to face wild and dangerous enemies. Sick folks keep it near their bedsides. Thousands carry it with them in daily life to be ready when temptations come. It is full of arrows that discomfit or perplex the enemy of our happiness.

There are moments when even little children feel discouraged. They sometimes have a feeling that no one cares for them, and they are ready to leave Sunday School and Church. They see some disobedient boy doing about as he pleases, and thinking he is having a good time they join him. Children with such thoughts are listening to the enemy of their souls.

That is the time to go to the Quiver for an arrow, that is, to the Bible, for some wise and helpful word from God. In a flash God will point you to a verse like this, "By faith, Moses . . . chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Faith in God, that is the arrow. Put it in your bow, quickly, and let it fly at the enemy, for when Satan sees a child trusting in God, he is discomfited and perplexed.

Then at times some children are tempted to steal, because they do not have as many pretty things as other children. Ernestine, who was only twelve years of age, was employed by Mrs. Bromwell to mind the baby. Mrs. Bromwell had

a daughter about the size and age of Ernestine, who had many pretty dresses. Ernestine coveted one of those dresses, so one day she slipped the pretty dress under her coat and went home with it.

When Ernestine's mother saw what her little girl had done, she made her return the garment immediately, and as soon as Ernestine came back home, her mother talked to her about honesty and truthfulness, and how God expected little girls to be honest. Then she turned to the Bible and taught Ernestine this verse, "No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly." The next time that child was tempted to steal, she rushed with all speed to her Bible for an arrow. This verse was the arrow, and she shot it at the enemy of her soul. Ernestine learned that if she lived in hope and honesty, every good thing would come to her.

There is another arrow children ought to shoot at the enemy every day. When some one calls us names, or tricks us, we want to do the same thing to him, we return evil for evil. In so doing we destroy the best that is in us. When people treated Jesus in that way, He dealt very patiently with them. He says, "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." That was the arrow Jesus shot at His enemies, and that

is the arrow we are to shoot also, when folks treat us unkindly.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus teaches children how to deal with their enemies. People are unkind because they listen to the enemy of their souls. Satan gets a grip on them. We must learn therefore to hate the sin, but not the person who commits it.

Let's shoot love arrows all day long; shoot them at our friends; shoot them at our enemies; shoot them at everybody.

How different these arrows that God shoots down to children, for they do not kill, but instead, make alive. And what a beautiful arrow God shot down when He made the arrow-head plant, and how He uses it to talk with us, reminding us of the arrows that discomfit and perplex the enemy.

Children, draw your bow, keep the Bible Quiver within reach, and shoot your arrows far and near. God will fly with every arrow you send. He will cause every arrow to perplex completely all who try to annoy or tempt you, and He will bring you off more than conquerors.

The High Bush Blackberry

Humble and modest, it wins favor with everyone.

XIV

THE HIGH BUSH BLACKBERRY

Living for Others

BLACKBERRY pudding, and then some jam on bread: Ooh! Shall we ever forget it? And didn't we dance when mother told us she had blackberry pie for supper?

"Kin I have a piece now, Ma?" That's what we said.

And even though we had been eating them in the fields, or among the hedges, during the day, we wanted more when we came home at evening time. The country children know they can find the trailing, prickly, blackberry shrub in waste places, and among the highway hedges, but sometimes the moor and other wild fowl beat the boys to the bushes, for they are very fond of the wild blackberry too.

In some places the long rods and twigs of the blackberry shrub are used for holding the straw in place on the thatched roofs of houses.

When beginning to grow, the stems sprout out, and rise directly from the root, but they do not bear fruit until the second season. As soon as the fruit bursts out on the twig, the stems become

weak and die. Their strength has been poured into the berry.

The shrub is tall and branching, with slim brown stems, from three to ten feet in length, and covered with sturdy prickles that bend slightly backward. The leaves are composed of from three to five smaller leaflets, each egg-shaped, pointed and toothed, with a ribbed and fuzzy surface. The flowers have five narrow, white petals, with five narrow green under-petals, that show up between each one of the flower petals. It is from this plant that the berries for market are developed. If the wild blackberry become frost-bitten, it develops deformities. The plant is found almost everywhere.

Children, how often mother has tucked us in bed and then read a good story to us. Well, God has planted story books all over the world. I see some of them in the wild flowers.

The blackberry bush has a wonderful story in it—the story of noble service, quietly rendered for others.

Remember, it is found in waste places and highways. So sometimes the lives of children and young people are found. Let me tell you about Dr. Paley, who was one of the world's great preachers and thinkers. When he was a student at college, he idled away his time. One night after squandering his time in sin, he slipped into his room, thinking he had not been heard by any one. The next

morning, however, a little blackberry bush, in the form of a friend, sprang up in this place where young Paley was wasting his life, and said:

"Paley, I have not been able to sleep, thinking about you. I have been thinking what a fool you are. I have come to warn you of your folly."

That friend of Paley's was bearing fruit in a place that was full of wasted moments, and it was on the highway of Paley's life—a highway where a soul had been loafing. This sharp warning pricked Paley's conscience, just as the prickles of the blackberry shrub would have pricked his flesh. He came to himself, and said:

"I will be good; I will make something out of my life."

So he gave his life to God, and studied very faithfully. In a few years he became Dr. Paley, the powerful philosopher and preacher of the Truth.

If we would get the most out of life, we must be quick to check those who are wasting their time. Prick them with words of truth, then our lives will be like a little blackberry shrub, bearing fruit in waste places and on the highways.

And did we not learn that as soon as the blackberry shrub gives out its fruit, its stems wither and die? How much like some good people this is.

A man by the name of Henry Martyn gained great fame as a missionary to the Indians. When a boy, he was nervous, excitable and irritable.

His schoolmates teased him a great deal, but there was one good Christian lad in Martyn's class, and he soon put a stop to the cowardly tricks of the tormentors. He protected weak little Henry all through the rest of his school and college life.

In later life Martyn said that the influence of that strong Christian boy led him to become a missionary to the Indians. Just as Martyn came to success and fame, this good friend died, and passed away unknown. But he did not die until he had landed Henry Martyn safely on the missionary field. Henry Martyn was like the fruit, while this unknown Christian friend was like the stems that withered and died as soon as the fruit was given to the world.

What a beautiful story of service this is. The stem dies, but not until it sends out a delicious fruit, that delights children, and nourishes weary travellers. What sacrifice!

The next page of this story book which God has written in the blackberry shrub tells us how to be good and useful. Lots of folks can tell us we ought to be good, but they cannot tell us how. Not so with the blackberry shrub—it halts us with its prickles, but it also tells us how to be good.

The stems rise directly from the root.

"There, that's the secret."

The Bible says, we must be "rooted and grounded in love." That means that our lives must grow like a branch out of the life of Jesus.

We must rise directly from the root,—gather strength from the Master. That is the way to be good.

Whenever Jesus did a good deed, He withered and died. He did not really shrink up and die, but He hid himself. He did not shout aloud all the good He was doing, but He went about quietly, doing good. He helped and healed the sick, then asked them not to speak of it. He saved every one of us, by offering Himself in our stead, so that "by His stripes we are healed." He gave us everlasting life. As soon as He did this, He withered away and died.

Millions of people would bring Him gifts of silver, gold and jewels, if they could. But He does not ask these things from us. He asks only that we try to be like Him. Men everywhere know their lives would be worthless, but for the quiet help Jesus gives them. He gave the fruit, life, to mankind, then He withdrew, happy to see men enjoy that life and immortality.

Oh, to be a boy or girl like that, always doing good and never looking for a reward. Some children won't get mother a stick of wood, or dry a dish, unless they get a penny for their services.

The wild blackberry shrub lets us into a little secret in the life of Jesus—that we are happiest only when living for others.

The Pokeweed or Inkberry

Sweet when young, but poisonous when older.

XV

THE POKEWEED

False Faces

"RAG-A-MUFFIN" day is Thanksgiving Day, isn't it? That is the day when so many of the children in various parts of our country cover their faces with funny looking false-faces, and dress in old ragged clothes. Then they go about the neighbourhood, blowing tin horns, and begging for pennies or fruit, and fooling everybody.

Sometimes children and folks make their own faces false by looking at us with a smile, and then acting in a treacherous manner when we are not present. We call this coming to us with a false front.

Even plants will draw us close to their flowers, leaves, and roots, with their sweetness, but when we go to them for help in time of hunger, they will feed us for a while, then poison us. Pokeweed, or the inkberry plant, welcomes us when it is tender and young, for then it is good to eat, but if we continue to depend upon it until it becomes tough and old, it will then poison us.

We have all heard how the spider said to the fly, "Step into my parlour."

But when the fly did, it was soon entangled with fine threads and perished. So the pokeweed, like the spider, wears a false face.

In the spring of the year the young and tender shoots of this plant have a sweet flavour like that of asparagus. They can be eaten if not cut too close to the root, and if thoroughly boiled. But we must be on our guard, because this youthful sweetness is a false face. Down deep in its root it is poisonous. Its fruit is also full of poison, as are its seeds. Many a child has died from eating the root of pokeweed, having first been drawn to it by its delicate flavour. Here is a plant that is a food with some good qualities when it is young, but that leads us to death if we continue in its company.

It is a pretty plant, with its reddish purple stems, its rich green foliage, and its clusters of white flowers. And, added to this and making it still more beautiful, are its dark purple berries, that hang from the stems like bunches of tiny grapes. The stout, smooth stems rise out of a root that lives all through the year. The plant grows from three to nine feet in height, and the flower clusters, which appear from July to September, grow as long as four inches.

In about two months the berries mature and take on their rich, dark purple colour. They are smooth, shiny, globe shaped, and flattened at both

ends, and contain black seeds embedded in a rich crimson juice. From this juice the western Indians made a red stain with which they painted their horses, and many articles of use or adornment. These berries when mature or ripe are used in medicine.

To see this plant, is to want it. The berries hang so gracefully and invitingly, that children, and even older folks, are tempted to eat them. But we must not forget that these berries are the fruit of a plant which furnishes good food only when young and tender; now, however, in its ripened state, it is full of deadly poison.

So there are many pleasures which seem innocent and harmless at first, but which after a while poison and ruin us. When they first appear, they wear false faces.

Satan wears all sorts of false faces, and at times would fool the very smartest of men. Jesus said if we would only walk with Him, He would show us the poison that is hid in some apparently harmless pastimes. Satan hides in some of these pleasures, and Jesus will always give us warning, and thus prevent the evil one from tripping us by surprise.

Jesus did speak of those people who wore false faces. He said they looked as harmless as sheep, but down in their hearts they were like wild wolves that tear men to pieces. There were others, He said, who looked like whited sepulchres, beautiful

on the outside; but inside they were full of rottenness—dead men's bones.

Some years ago I knew a boy who thought it was harmless to idle away his time with a group of disorderly boys. His mother warned him of the dangers that loafing would lead to. But Jack said, "Mother, we do not bother any one. What harm can there be in that?" It all looked harmless to Jack.

Soon he played "hookie" from Sunday School to be with those boys. Then he tried cigarette smoking, and that led him to try smoking that awful stuff that only the lowest smoke, opium. He became very careless in his habits, and lost his position. Then he started to steal, first from his mother, and later from others by breaking into a store at night. He was caught, arrested, and carried off to prison. Ever since that time his life has been a most horrible one.

Recently I received a letter from his broken-hearted mother, asking me if I knew of Jack's whereabouts. She has not seen him for years. But every night she prepares his bed and lights the room. The light is kept burning all through the night. She is hoping and praying that some day he will return, and when he does, no matter what hour of the day or night it may be, she wants his room all ready for him. Jack's room has a window on the street side of the house, and should he pass by that way, he will see this light of wel-

come which his devoted mother keeps burning for him.

Ah, it seemed like a sweet, innocent pastime to lounge around with a few other boys, but how poor Jack was poisoned by it later. His heart and mind have been so poisoned that every good thought and trait in him has perished.

Jesus warns us not to be deceived with things just because they are sweet and beautiful at first. We must go back to the roots, to the secret workings, and study things out through every branch, to see what sort of fruit is produced. By this fruit we shall know whether or not it will be safe for us to continue our acquaintanceship.

Watch for the false faces. Satan dresses poisonous habits up in beautiful garments. This is the way he catches God's children. He makes things taste sweet, and look pretty at first, but they lead to death.

The beautiful pokeweed plant, with its young and tender sprouts, supplies real food to man, but down in its root it has a poison stored, which a little later it will bring out in its fruit; and death lurks in that pretty fruit.

Let us learn from pokeweed to watch for the false faces that cover up the poison in some pleasures, and in some people as well.

The Cat-tails

Bread, Puddings, and Cake can be made with cat-tails.

XVI

THE CAT-TAILS

A White Heart in a Black World

WILLIE gave his father this conundrum: "Daddy," said he, "what do they call little cats down in Mexico?"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied Daddy.

"Why," shouted Willie with a laugh of victory, "they call them kittens, of course."

Then he rushed into the cellar and caught two of the baby kittens by their tails, and started upstairs with them.

When Daddy heard them squealing he said:

"Willie, don't hurt those kittens."

"I won't, Daddy," answered Willie, "I'm carrying them by the stems."

There is a plant that grows wild in the swamps and marshes and that looks so much like a cat's tail that some one has so named it. It is the common swamp cat-tail, and children enjoy gathering it. But little do they realize how much food those roots contain.

The Indians dug them up and dried them, then ground them into a powder, and with this powder

made their puddings and bread. Some folks are always eager for new things to eat; here is one to give them, children,—cat-tail pudding. They may laugh, but hold your ground, for you can prove you are right.

The Indians taught the white man how to eat potatoes and corn, but the cat-tail seems to have been forgotten. Recently some flour made from cat-tail roots was tested by chemists of the Food Administration Office at Washington, D. C., and they said that it had nearly as much food value as rice, and that it was as good as wheat flour.

On one acre of ground we can raise two tons of flour from the cat-tail. In the United States there are about one hundred and forty thousand square miles of swamp land, and to us it may seem waste, but God has filled it with this fine food for man. That is the way God gives; He just covers the earth with His blessings.

Plants must eat and drink, or else they will die. When little children eat, they carry the food to their mouths with their hands. So this cat-tail plant has hands; they go out from the root in the form of long brown hairs, and collect the food from the soil, draw it into the root, then send it up through the plant.

The slimy, stagnant, green swamp water is not fit to drink, but is loaded with poisons that would kill both child and plant. The hands of the cat-tail root pick up much of this poison, and if it went

directly into the plant, it would kill it. All the food that these long, brown, hand-like hairs pick up is first carried into an outside casing, or covering of the root. This casing is a sort of mouth and digestive organ combined, receiving and distributing the food and waste particles as well.

The food that is picked from the foul, swamp soil, now passes through the casing and is strained. While the straining is going on, every impurity is held in the casing, but the pure and nourishing particles of food enter the core of the root and feed the plant. By the time this food matter from the swamp reaches the core or heart of the root, it is pure and white.

Although the root of the cat-tail plant is completely surrounded by poisons, the heart of that root is a pure food, upon which the plant thrives, and upon which man also would grow healthy and strong.

Isn't that like conditions in this world where little children must grow every day? There is so much evil we wonder how it is possible for children to keep pure and good, but in the cat-tail plant we get an idea how it is done.

God has built a sort of casing around our minds and hearts, to act just as the casing around the heart of the cat-tail root does. Public schools and colleges that develop our minds, and Sunday Schools and Churches that develop our souls, make up that casing. These institutions are refining, and

act as strainers that sift out poisonous thoughts and plans, so that they will not reach our hearts.

Our lives are planted in the midst of much wickedness, but the Church and school will train our consciences, and we will be quick to separate the good from the bad. Under the influence of good and noble thoughts, we will throw out the poisonous elements. If all our plans and habits, then, are sifted and strained by Christian character, they will be as a pure and wholesome food for daily living.

So Christ safeguards children, and keeps them pure in a world of temptation and sin, just as God keeps the heart of the cat-tail root pure in the swampy soil.

In cities and towns there are districts known as factory districts and tenement districts. These we usually call poor neighbourhoods. Some of the streets are not always clean, and some of the children who play in them are rough. But men must work in the factories, or near the tenement district, and that makes it necessary for many children to live in these neighbourhoods, where there are hundreds of influences that are like poisonous impurities. But if the children keep faithful to Church and school, they will have every help to grow up pure in heart, even in a poor neighbourhood. The crowded tenement, where some of the people are quarrelling much of the time, and where fighting and foul language are often seen and

heard, can never harm the child who keeps true to God. Living every day by the standards of the Church and Bible will give any child a white heart in a black world.

Look at that little town of Nazareth in the Holy Land. It was a very wicked place, yet the Child Jesus grew up there. And Jesus was the purest and sweetest Child that ever lived. He was a Child that grew up with a white heart in a black world. Now the child with the pure heart will be like the cat-tail root; having the power to help others also to be strong and pure. Such a child is a blessing, for he makes many others healthy and happy.

It is not difficult to see how the cat-tail teaches the secret of growing pure in heart, even though completely surrounded with evil. The Bible says, "The devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." All the howling and roaring Satan can do will not in the least disturb the child who keeps steady in Church and school. No matter what the neighbourhood, our Church and our school are the great strainers that will help us sift out the evil.

Even in this stagnant, swampy, poisonous world, the child life can develop unstained, and his heart can grow up white and pure. And this is what the cat-tail teaches us.

The Meadowsweet

It is more than a flower, lovely to look at; it is a delicious food, and like spinach, good for folks who have rheumatism.

XVII

THE MEADOWSWEET

Sweetened Lives

GOOD deeds, like a precious ointment, fill the house with a sweet odour. Children, then, whose days are full of kind acts and happy ways, are like a precious ointment about any home—they brighten and sweeten the atmosphere.

We cannot look at the meadowsweet plant without thinking how lovely it would be in this world if every one were free from bitterness.

Down along the edges of the woods and swamps, and at the roadsides, grows this common, but beautiful, downy-like meadowsweet shrub. Its flowers are in clusters of tiny white blossoms of five petals each, with numerous pink threads coming up out of the centers, that give them a feathery appearance and rosy tint. The clusters are pyramid shaped, and bloom handsomely during July and August. It can be found anywhere from New York to Missouri, and southward.

Meadowsweet is not merely a flower beautiful to look at, but is a valuable and delicious food, and

a tonic for people subject to rheumatism. Like spinach and cabbage, it is a food that drives out the impurities of the blood. In the spring of the year it is cooked in thick soups.

The people of Iceland believed that if this plant were thrown into the water, on St. John's Day, it would help them to discover a thief. If the culprit were a man, the plant would sink, if a woman, it would float. But the meadowsweet does not give that idea to me at all. No matter where I look at it, by the roadside or at the edge of the swamp, anywhere, everywhere, I can only see in the clusters countless happy little boys and girls. Each little floret is like the face of a well-behaved, rosy-cheeked child.

Queen Elizabeth of England asked that meadowsweet be kept spread about her rooms, because the fragrance scented up the whole palace. At summer banquets the halls and houses used to be decorated with it, for the sweet odour made the heart merry and did not cause headaches.

Kind and thoughtful children, like the meadowsweet, are a beautiful decoration in any home. The paintings on the walls may be worth thousands of dollars, and visitors may gape with wonder at the soft moonlight scenes and flashing sunsets, but their eyes soon tire of these, and they desire other things. Valuable and beautiful as are the works of famous artists, they are not to be compared with the priceless value and beauty of one sweet little

child in a house. People never get tired of such a child.

The rarest tapestries and the richest embroideries will in time weary people, but a dutiful and loving child—never! There is no furniture, however expensive, that can make any room as attractive as a good child. Furniture goes out of style, but a darling child never does. Like the meadowsweet, a good child is the desire of kings and queens all over the world, because their sweet and thoughtful little manners make the heart merry, and do not cause headaches.

The Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians and also the Jews, poured sweet oils and ointments on their heads, and on their clothes, at certain important festivals and gatherings. Many people do the same thing nowadays. They sprinkle cologne on their handkerchiefs and clothes, and some still moisten their heads with it, to give them a sweet smell. It is said that in parts of China the natives pour perfumed water over their bodies, instead of taking a bath. It would seem that in some quarters there are those in America who do that, even now. There are naughty children who would prefer that, for I have seen some who had to be dragged to their bath, as a balky mule has to be dragged to his duty.

Among the Egyptians and other Easterners, every guest, upon entering the house, was anointed, that is, some fragrant oil was poured on him.

This was an act of courtesy and admiration. So when Jesus came into the house of His friends at Bethany, Mary, who loved Him very much, brought a pound of ointment made of spikenard, the most expensive kind, and poured it over His feet. Then to show her modesty and lowliness of mind, she wiped His feet with her hair. "The odour of that ointment filled the house."

Wherever there are good and obedient children, there is a sweet fragrance through the house, sweeter even than the meadowsweet. In many a child's album we have written:

"Roses are red, violets are blue,
Sugar is sweet, and so are you."

But a sweet child is sweeter than the sweetest sugar.

A little chap about eight years of age saw his grandmother when she returned from a shopping trip, one day, all worn out. He hurried to untie her shoes and bring her slippers. Then in a very thoughtful way, he looked up into her face and said, "Grandma, I knew you would be tired; Mother said you would get weary tramping through those stores." The dear old lady was very much worn out, but the conduct of this kind little grandson cheered her. As soon as she had her slippers on, she went up-stairs to a room in which the boy's mother lay, very ill. She told the

sick mother how thoughtfully the boy had acted, and though that mother was very sick, she smiled. In the evening when Daddy came home, weary and exhausted from his work, the sick mother told him of little Harold's kindness to Grandma, and he smiled. That kind deed just filled the house with gladness. It was like the ointment that filled the house with a sweet fragrance, or like the meadowsweet that gave the rooms a bracing odour.

How lovely to go about everywhere, filling the air with the sweetness of kind acts, rather than with the blue bitterness of oaths and ill-tempered words.

Disobedient children give parents and teachers many a headache, but how much better to be like that little chap, Harold, who took away a headache by the charm of his kind thoughtfulness.

If God can put charm into a delicate little plant like meadowsweet, a plant that grows by swamps and roadsides, certainly He can put charms into the hearts of little children whom He loves with an everlasting love.

To make sad faces break into smiles, and to sweeten bitter lives, that is the part of every boy and girl in this world.

The Burdock

Blood purifier - it can be eaten like asparagus.

XVIII

BURDOCK

The Child Who Got There

"STICK-BUTTONS," and "Beggar-buttons," children call them, but their real name is burdock. Little folks build houses, and men, and dolls, and animals with them, and when no one is looking, they fling them at one another's clothing.

Burdock is a common roadside weed, and got its name from its burr-like fruit, consisting of hooked tips. It will grow in almost any sort of soil. We see it in the city lots, growing up among old tin cans and heaps of junk. In dry and sandy soil the roots will go down to a depth of two or three feet, making it necessary to dig them out. When it is full grown, the plant is from three to seven feet in height, the lower leaves often measuring eighteen inches from the stem to the tip. The flowers appear from July until frost, but children cannot find them on the plant until it starts its second year's growth. They grow in small clusters, and some are red, some purple, and some white, just covered all over with hooked tips, forming a spiny burr, that catches to the clothing of people, and to the wool and hair of animals. One

plant will give as many as four hundred thousand seeds.

Some say it is a pest, but that is what some thoughtless and selfish people say about a little child. When they learn of the burdock's real value, they see it is not in the least a pest. God made it stick to people's clothes and animals' wool so that it would not die, but would in this funny way scatter its seeds and go on spreading and growing. When people or animals rub up against the burdock, how those stickers do stick. They stick until they are either brushed, picked, or shaken off. And right where they fall, they spring up into a new plant. The burdock burr has stuck so successfully that it has journeyed half-way around the world, and has never paid a cent of car-fare.

The burdock not only furnishes fun for the children, but it is a blessing of food, and has healing powers beside. Why, when the outer rind of the stem is stripped off, it can be eaten like asparagus. In the root there is a soapy substance that makes it valuable for blood and skin diseases. If the roots are to be used for this purpose, they must not be dug up until the end of the first year's growth. How can any one call this excellent blood purifier a pesky weed? Then, too, it has a story to tell that is refreshing to every child who will listen.

When Mr. Carey, the great missionary to India, was a boy, he tried to climb a tree. After getting

up quite high, his foot slipped, and he fell all the way to the ground, and broke his leg. While he was in bed, with his leg bandaged, he kept saying, "Wait till I get out again, I'll climb that tree, just wait till I get out." And, sure enough, when he got out, the first thing he did was to climb that same tree. He was hindered for a time with a broken leg, but that did not stop him long. He started at it again as soon as he could. He stuck like a burdock burr. He did what the burdock burr does when it is shaken off; he started to grow more effectively than ever, at the very spot where he was shaken off.

St. Paul was a wonderful Christian preacher who lived in the days of Jesus. He was glad he had become a Christian, and he declared many times that nothing would ever separate him from Christ. Having started the Christian life, he said he would stick until he reached heaven. He said, "This one thing I do." There are boys and girls who at one time determined to be Christians, but who did not stick. They gave up too easily. They were too quickly discouraged. Many other children have stuck, and are sticking now, and these are growing up to be strong characters. Children ought to stick to the right as a burdock burr sticks to people's clothing and animals' wool. Say as Paul said, "This one thing I do."

It is the fellow who sticks that accomplishes something. The farmer, the mechanic, the mer-

chant, and the labourer who sticks to his work produces results. That boy Carey, who stuck to his purpose, climbed the tree. In just the same way he stuck to every good purpose in his life. When he first went to India as a missionary, the natives drove him away and shook him off, but he stuck to them as the burdock burr sticks, and in a few years he set up a college at Serampore. Before he got through he built sixteen flourishing missionary stations, and translated the Bible into sixteen different languages. He said, "I'll be a missionary," and because he stuck, he accomplished a great deal for God, and for the poor heathen as well.

St. Paul did not let anything discourage him either. He made several missionary tours, and established Churches all over the old world. He wrote remarkable letters to the people of those Churches, and his letters are now a part of our Bible. By his teaching he has brought millions of souls into a better understanding of Christianity. He suffered many hardships and sorrows, yet he stuck. He had one awful sorrow, which he called a thorn in his flesh—some say it was blindness—but he stuck. He was thrown into prison, bound in chains, threatened with death, and shipwrecked at sea, yet he stuck. He said, "This one thing I do," and he did it. He stuck like the burdock burr, for wherever he was shaken off, there he sprang up into a thousand new influences.

But, children, look at Jesus, the Son of God. One of His disciples, writing about Him, says, "He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." Now Jesus knew that at Jerusalem His most deadly enemies were waiting for Him. He knew they had planned to seize Him, mock Him, insult Him, and then crucify Him; nevertheless He would not change His course. He stuck to the one purpose of His life—the work of saving mankind.

The mob of brutish murderers at Jerusalem thought they had shaken Jesus off, that is, they thought they had got rid of Him when they crucified Him, but He grew bigger than ever right on the very spot where they thought they had put an end to Him. A new world sprang up at the spot where Jesus shed His innocent blood. Jesus produced a Christian world, an everlasting kingdom, because He stuck to the one purpose of His life, to serve God and man. How like the burdock burr, that takes root where it is shaken off, and immediately springs up into a new and sometimes even more beautiful plant.

Beautiful burdock, with its burr so persevering, its food so strengthening to the body, and its instruction so encouraging to the timid or wavering child. Is it not harsh to say of such a plant—it is a pest?

The Thistle

It can be eaten raw, boiled, or baked in a pie.

XIX

THE THISTLE

A Friend with Thorns On

CHILDREN who roam barefooted through the fields often get pricked with the thistle plant. But the wounds of the thistle are like the corrections or wounds of a faithful friend. When friends hurt us, it is only to point out some better way to our own happiness.

There are many different kinds of thistles, but they all look alike. They are very attractive in the uncultivated fields, along the roadsides, and in waste open spots where grass is scarce, and where hungry cows and horses wander. They blossom from July until September, and have very juicy stalks and "tasty" leaves. The flower and leaf are protected by hundreds of prickles, that seem like little soldiers with sharp bayonets set, ready for action. These sharp points dishearten all animals except the donkey, and the man. Here is one instance where we may say that the donkey and the man are classified in the same group, even though the man may not like it very much.

In parts of England and Scotland the people boil the tender stalks of the marsh thistle, or sometimes

they bake them in a pie, and children often peel them and eat them raw. Think of thistle pie. That is something new to many folks. Various other kinds of thistles are gathered when the stalks are young, and are prepared for salads or boiled as greens; this is a favourite dish with the Siberians and Russians.

Even to-day there are many people in some parts of Italy who throw thistles on their fires in times of thunder-storms, because they believe the thistle will protect them from the flashes of lightning.

In spite of its short sharp prickles, there are millions who love the thistle. More than a thousand years ago, the Danes sailed up the rivers of England and Scotland in flat-bottom boats, sneaked ashore, and after stealing crops and cattle got away again before the surprised people knew what had happened. These Danes had a rule that they would never attack any one who was sleeping, but they once decided to break this rule and make a night raid. They landed all right, and expected to surprise the sleeping towns-people; but as they were creeping through the fields very silently, one of the Danes stepped with his naked foot right down on a thistle. He was so startled, he let out a yell that awakened the people. They rushed to arms, and drove the sea-robbers away.

The thistle was then adopted as the national flower of Scotland, and has ever since been honoured. This is how a thistle saved a whole

town. The Scotchman does not mind the prickles, for he always remembers that even if the thistle does wound, that same kind of a wound at another time saved his people from dangerous enemies.

Children, the thistle is like a real friend. First, the roots go deep—deeper than the roots of some trees, and deeper than a plow will cut. That is just like a friend's love. It is so true and so deep, that even though our sharp words and deeds cut like a plow, they do not cut deep enough to cut away that true love which our friends have for us. That is the way mother and father love us, and often our teachers too. The Master always loves us with a love that goes deep. The Bible says that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Next, the thistle tells where fertile soil can be found. A certain blind man went out to purchase a piece of land. He said, "Take me to a thistle." He knew that wherever a thistle grows, there the soil is rich and fertile. The thistle may wound, but see how it guides the blind man, and shows him good soil. That blind man may say, "Ouch," when pricked with the thistle, but he also quickly says, "Give me this piece of ground." So the Master's words of correction may sting us, yet He is the Friend who leads us into surroundings that

make our lives fruitful. He places us where our efforts accomplish the most good.

Then, if you are well acquainted with the thistle, it will be your friend in time of storm. If we watch a bee at a thistle, we will learn whether or not the storm will be serious. If the bee stay on the thistle, the storm will not last long, but if the bee go home, the storm will last. Bees are guided by an instinct in time of storm, and they never make a mistake. Here is a bee that stings and a thistle that wounds, yet both give us correct information in time of bad or threatening weather. So when temptations or dangers threaten little children, it is always best to go to friends who tell us the truth, even if what they tell us does hurt our feelings.

There is one more trait about this prickly thistle that fills the mind with thoughts of Jesus. Its seeds yield a wonderful oil, which is clear, smooth and soothing. It is very good for cooking purposes, and also for giving light. The thistle may prick us, but when we come closer to it, and crush it, in return for the sting, it gives a rich, sweet oil. It does not throw out poison like a snake, but instead gives out this valuable oil, that brings light and healing to the very person who has crushed the plant.

This is the way Jesus has always acted toward us. He warns all persons against sin and tries to lead them to happy living, but many people be-

come pierced by His words. About two thousand years ago when He was on earth, some of the people resented His warnings, and they bruised and beat Him, and at last crushed out His life on the cross. He did not turn in anger against them, nor did He call His angels down from heaven to destroy His enemies. When they bruised Him, blood flowed from His side, and that blood has become like a healing oil, and a light-giving oil, to all the nations of the earth. Though crushed, He yielded a balm.

Children everywhere play with the thistle flower-heads that have turned to blow-balls. How we hold them in our hand, and give one good hard blow, and as we puff away the down we sing:

"Marian, Marian, what's the time of day?
One o'clock, two o'clock, it's time we were away."

It is time we were away; away to work and play, remembering ever that our truest friends are like the thistle; they may wound us, yet they love us with a love deep and true, with a love that does everything it can to make us happy.

The Wild Strawberry

Valuable as a food for blood, bones, teeth, hair, finger-nails, and skin.

XX

THE WILD STRAWBERRY

Words with a Sweet Taste

EVERY child likes strawberry short-cake, and some will eat it until the strawberries and cream get all the way around as far as their ears, with a dab of the cream stuck to the end of their nose.

The wild strawberry plant has a root stalk that trails along the ground, from which rise fuzzy stems, and on these stems the leaves and flowers grow. Several wheel-shaped flowers, with five rounded white petals, and narrow, greenish under petals, grow on each stem.

After flowering time, the green center of the flower swells, grows pulpy, and is painted a beautiful red by the rays of the sun. All over the surface of the berry, little dents hold the seeds. So the berry is the expanded or swelled flower center. The average height of the plant is about five inches. It probably received its name from the custom of laying straw between the rows of the plants when cultivating them.

God seems to have scattered this delicious little berry broadcast in fields, pastures, and hedges.

Years ago, people claimed that the strawberry

made the heart merry. The berries were crushed, and cooling drinks were made of the juices. Say, "Strawberry Soda," to children now, and they will rub their chests and sing out, "Ooh!" So the strawberry does make the heart merry.

Kings of England paid a high price to get the strawberry roots for their gardens. For many years the Spanish people have regarded strawberries, with milk or cream, and sugar added, as a rare dish. But we use the berry also for soda drinks, ice-cream, sherbet, jam, and short-cake.

The strawberry is a real food, and the entire plant is of great value as a tonic. A little of the root will stop a running nose. The leaves are used for their flavour, and for decorating salads.

As a food it is one of the richest in organic salts, sodium, calcium, iron, and silicon. Now let me explain what all these things mean to the body.

If we did not have sufficient sodium in our blood, certain poisonous waste acids would accumulate, and soon we should be sick with rheumatism, consumption, anæmia, and other diseases.

If we did not have sufficient calcium in our bodies, our bones and teeth would soon become chalky and crumble away.

If we did not have enough iron in our blood, we should suffer indigestion, for iron is the substance in the blood that carries oxygen through the body, and makes a fire that burns up and digests all the waste particles of food.

If we did not have enough silicon in our bodies, our hair would lose its life, our finger nails would become brittle, and our skin would easily bruise.

And, just think of it, God bundles up a lot of each of these substances in every little strawberry.

Isn't this a wonderful food? Some say it should never be cooked or preserved, and when taken fully ripe and fresh from the vine, it is the best blood toning fruit known; good for the sick, and also for those who are on the way to recovery.

In the Book of Psalms the sufferings and temptations of David are told. David was always very sorry for his mistakes, so much so that he said he often cried so hard his pillow was soaked with his tears.

One day while talking with God he said, "Oh God, wicked people and wicked demons are all about, just waiting to destroy me, but I keep Thy words in my mind." Then pausing a moment he said, "How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste."

Children in this day are surrounded with many evils that seek to destroy their souls. But, like the wild strawberry, each word of God's is filled with a power that makes boys and girls strong for the fight against Satan. Immediately after David spoke of the sweetness of God's words, he shouted out, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

A certain girl visited a dance hall, and there fell into the hands of people who sought to destroy

her character. She listened to these wicked people and slipped away from her good home, but later was caught and placed under arrest. Poor girl, only seventeen, and behind the bars of a jail cell. Friends interceded for her, and she was released, but in a couple of weeks she disappeared and none of her family has heard from her since.

Had she listened to the words of God, she would have found them a " lamp unto her feet, and a light unto her path."

There are just three words that to me seem to hang on the pages of the Bible, like three ripe, luscious strawberries on a strawberry vine. And sweet as those berries might be in a child's mouth, these words are sweeter in the mind and thought.

The first word is *Forgive*. Whenever the ancient Jews realized their sins against God, they would go about the streets of the city moaning and wailing. They called it going about in sackcloth and ashes. Once when they were going about like this, Jeremiah, a prophet, came to them, and cried out, " God will forgive." At the sound of that word forgive, they braced up immediately.

How quickly all the tears of a little child are dried, when mother or father forgives. So when we learn that God is merciful and forgives us our sins, how happy we are. Forgive is a sweet word, and it braces up our hearts, just as the sodium, iron, calcium, and silicon of the strawberry brace up our bodies.

Keep is the second word. Wicked people may set their traps, but God has said that no matter what temptations or snares surround His children, He will show them a way of escape. Daniel was thrown into a den with lions, but he trusted in God, and not one of the lions touched him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown by enemies into a fiery furnace, but they trusted in God, and not one flame burned them, their hair was not even singed. Keep is a sweet word. God will keep His children here, and through eternity.

Love is the third word. Mother's love, Daddy's love, and then God's love—who can describe it? It is all so wonderful. When a darling lisping child crawls up on Mother's knee and whispers, "Mother, I love you," how can Mother answer? Mother may hug and squeeze the youngster until its bones seem to crack, yet when the squeezing is all over, Mother is still at a loss to express her love fully. What must God's love be like? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Forgiven, kept, loved. What a wonderful story the wild strawberry tells. Sweet words to any who may be sad, or tempted. Speak them out whenever some one is near.

The Rampion

The leaves and roots are delicious as a salad,
or boiled with butter or oil. The juice good for sore-throat.

XXI

THE RAMPION

Wonder-Working Tears

THE rampion cannot be put in prison. It seems to have so strong a desire for society that nothing can keep it hid. Whenever some one attempts to hold it back, it seems to sing:

"Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man,
For Jesus Himself lived upon the road,
Where men were passing along;
And His great tender heart, and His mighty arm,
Were ready to bless the throng."

Out in the fields where boys and girls chase the speckled butterfly, and where grown-ups tramp away time, but more often by the side of the hard, dusty road, this dainty little bell-flower grows. Through the New England states, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, where thousands of trucks, wagons, horses and automobiles stir up the dust of the busy highway, right there the rampion grows to serve the multitudes.

Its leaves and roots are used by many as a

salad. Some boil the roots and leaves, and enjoy the delicious asparagus-like flavour. Others boil the plant with butter or oil. The rampion leaves and roots are more nourishing than radishes. In some neighbourhoods it is called "Throat-wort," because it is very good for throat troubles, containing very much of a certain substance known as alkaloid.

All through the winter months the roots can be gathered. This is interesting, because times of trouble and hardship are often spoken of as the winter time of life. So we see that all through such a season rampion is ready to give its strength and nourishment.

Wonderful little flower, with wonder-working tears flowing from its cheek petals. Tears will stream down the cheeks of the bruised or scalded child, so rampion weeps too when bruised or scalded, and its tears are full of healing. The tears or juice of rampion mixed with water, and rubbed on the face, will give a clear complexion.

There is a story about a little girl, Rapunzel, which, by the way, is another pronunciation for rampion. Rapunzel was supposed to be the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was about twelve years of age an old witch stole her, and locked her in a tower in the forest. Thank goodness, we do not believe in witches in these days. The tower had only one little window near the top, and when the witch wished to get in, she

would call to Rapunzel to let down her beautiful long hair out of the window, then taking hold of the braid, the witch would climb up to the window and crawl in.

One day a young prince was riding past the tower, and he heard singing. It was Rapunzel. Think of it, locked in a tower, yet singing. That is like the rampion flower, which keeps its sweetness no matter where it has to live.

The prince tried to get into the tower, but could not, because he could find neither doors nor windows. He came another day, and saw how the old witch got in. Next day after that he came again and called for Rapunzel to let down her hair, and he climbed in. When he found this beautiful Rapunzel there, he brought her silk which she wove into a ladder, by which she was to get out of the tower. The old witch discovered the plan, and in her rage, she cut off Rapunzel's wonderful hair. She then took her to a desert and left her there, but Rapunzel kept singing through it all.

Now the old witch got after the prince. She took the golden braid of hair and went back into the tower with it. The next day when the prince called for Rapunzel, the witch let down the braid. The prince climbed up, but wasn't he thunderstruck when, instead of seeing beautiful Rapunzel, he stared into the eyes of the horrible old witch! He leaped from the tower to save his life, and

fell into a heap of thorns which put out his eyes. He wandered blindly through the woods, living on roots and berries, mourning for Rapunzel.

One day while wandering he heard singing. It was Rapunzel. She saw him and ran to meet him, threw her arms around his neck and wept. Two of her tears fell on his eyes, and his sight was restored immediately. The prince then took Rapunzel to his kingdom, where they were both happy. The Bible tells us that "they who sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Rapunzel's tears are not to be had any more, because she lived in fairy-land. But there are tears that still work wonders. Ever so many of the world's greatest artists have spent years trying to paint the face of Jesus with tears on His cheeks. Wonderful tears!

Two sisters came to Jesus, and said, "Jesus, our brother Lazarus is dead." Jesus knew Lazarus and loved him, so He went to the grave. At the grave, "Jesus wept." I have wondered if those tears fell on Lazarus. Anyway, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus came out of the grave.

To this very hour people who are blind and dead in sin look up at the face of Jesus, and seeing His tears they are moved to sin no more.

A drunken and brutish man came home one evening, and struck, and swore at his wife. Their little daughter was near by, and in the excitement

she began to cry. She was a brave little girl, for she climbed up on her drunken father's knee and said, "Oh, Daddy, don't hit Mother, don't hit Mother." As she said this, a tear fell from her eyes on Daddy's cheek, and that drunken man could never wipe that tear away. It seemed to burn a hole in his cheek. Many years have passed on, and he feels the tear yet.

It worked wonders, for that man never drank again, and he was good to Mother. Yes, the roughest people are often made tender by the burn of a baby's tear.

Down where children and men are struggling, the rampion gives her leaves and roots and juice. To the toiling, sorrowing crowds it brings nourishment and brightens their complexions, not with a paste that is false, but with a real blood-purifying tonic.

Who knows but what those tears of mother's and father's will some day fall upon the disobedient or ungovernable child. Hope on, pray on, for those who "sow in tears shall reap in joy," and the faces of naughty children shall be made full of smiles once more.

Oh, rampion, with your juice, your tears, showing even children how much good may come out of their trials and tears.

The Common Sunflower

An oil cake is made of the seeds by grinding them into a meal, and this is very fattening.

XXII

THE COMMON SUNFLOWER

The Great Miner

THE miner brings up things that have been hid in the earth for thousands of years. Iron, brass, copper, silver and gold, sapphires, rubies and glistening diamonds, the miner brings to light.

But there is a Great Miner, the Greatest of them all, and every child must learn of His wonderful work. The Bible says that " His eye seeth every precious thing," no matter where it is hid, whether deep in the heart of the earth or deep in the heart of a boy or girl. God sees talents in children, when nobody else does; and just as the miner digs gold and diamonds from the heart of the earth, so the Greatest of Miners, God, can dig out talents from the heart of a child.

Where did we discover this? Well, one morning, quite early, by the side of a rickety old barn, we spied a glowing, wild sunflower. It was not all opened, and a little study showed that somewhere there was a Great Miner Who was opening up that flower and digging out good things. Through the night the flower drooped, and covered itself with its petals, as with a blanket. In the

morning it was holding its face toward the light, to meet the rising sun, then its petals opened wide. We could have torn it open, but that would have killed the flower. No one but the Great Miner could open it and bring out the glory that was hid there.

Some say the sunflower does not follow the sun; that this is only a poet's fancy, but others declare they have seen growing plants of the sunflower at a certain period of development keep their faces to the sun.

There are many varieties of the sunflower, such as the ten-petalled, Jerusalem artichoke, etc. We are interested in the common wild sunflower that grows from Minnesota to Texas and westward. Mexico and Peru claim it as a native. The plant reaches a height of from three to six feet, with flower heads from three to six inches in diameter, and blooms from July until September. The enormous heads are from the cultivated plants. The leaf is broadly oblong, tooth edged, rough on the upper surface, and covered with soft hairs on the under side.

The Great Miner first sent His helpers, the bees, to dig out honey and wax from this sunflower. When the Indians saw the bees digging treasures out of it, they dug out the seeds, which they ate both raw and cooked. Then they dug out the roots, which they used for catarrh, bronchitis, skin diseases, indigestion and liver disorders. The In-

dians called the Great Miner the Great Spirit, and they thoroughly believed He brought out these hidden virtues of the plant for them.

After the Indians came the white miner, and the Great Miner showed the white miner still more wonderful treasures in the plant.

In China, Southern Europe, Egypt, India and Russia the sunflower is cultivated. The seeds make excellent food for poultry, pigeons, rabbits, sheep, cows, horses, pigs, and children, but we do not let the pigs eat out of the same dish with the children.

An oil is crushed from the seeds that is more like olive oil than any other vegetable oil known. An oil cake is made of the seeds, by grinding them into a meal, and these cakes are filled with a fine fattening food substance, called nitrogen.

Some people roast the seeds and use them as coffee. There is a fibre in the stems which is very strong, and makes a thread that looks like silk. In Russia the seeds are sold upon the streets, as peanuts are sold in America, and eaten raw. Mothers tell us not to swallow apple pits, for if we should, they say, apple trees will grow up in our stomachs. Well, it would not hurt most of us to swallow the sunflower seeds, because then we should grow up with faces like sunflowers, bright and turned toward the light, growing much good within our hearts.

The Great Miner not only digs in the earth,

bringing out gold and jewels, He digs into flowers also and brings out foods and medicines that are hid there. Most wonderful of all, He digs into the hearts of children and folks, and brings out talents worth more than gold, and character worth more than jewels.

Joseph Haydn was the son of a poor wheelwright. Joseph kept his ear open for music. He learned to play on an old worm-eaten piano, but that did not stop him from desiring the best music. One day he heard Handel's chorus sing, and it inspired him to write a masterful composition called "Creation." Had Joseph played rag-time and jazz, he never would have been led to write beautiful music, but he kept his face turned toward the light of the truly great musicians.

Scanderbeg was the brave prince of Albania. After his death the Turks wished to possess his bones, that they might wear a piece next to their hearts, hoping in this way to secure a portion of the wonderful courage he displayed while alive.

Those Turks desired to keep their faces turned toward a great leader, so that the best in them might be drawn out.

Greater than all of these great men, is the Great Miner, God. He gave to us His Son, Who is the Light toward which every one, everywhere, should turn their faces, for by so doing noble thoughts and brave deeds will be drawn from the deepest corners of our minds and hearts.

It was Jerry McAuley who was asleep and half closed up, like that wild sunflower by the side of the old barn. But one morning this drunken river thief set his face toward the Light. Many thought there was no good in Jerry at all. They called him a bum, loafer, liar, thief, and said he ought never to have been let out of jail.

But God, the Great Miner, knew just where the good was buried in Jerry's heart. Jerry kept his face toward the Light, toward God, and in a very short time he blossomed into a missionary on the water front of New York City. Some of the wealthiest and brainiest people of America came to his help, and his life yielded deeds that were like a rich oil, and his service to ruined men and women covered them like garments of silk.

If the Great Miner can dig such golden deeds out of the heart of a poor wretched thief and drunkard like Jerry McAuley, what wonders of sparkling jewels will He dig from the lives of children who have not covered their talents with heaps of muddy sins. "The thing that is hid, bringeth He forth to light."

The Pearly Everlasting

Good eating, mixed with other greens, or chopped nuts and honey.

XXIII

THE PEARLY EVERLASTING

The Day That Has No Night

"MOONSHINE," some call it, because at night, in the thicket, the silvery gloss of its long, narrow, smooth-edged, grayish-green leaf looks like a ray of moonlight. Others call it "Silverleaf," because the woolly-like underneath side of the leaf, together with the grayish-green top side, have the appearance of silver. There are still others who call it "Life Everlasting," or "Pearly Everlasting," because a bunch of the leaves and flowers placed on the mantel will keep fresh through the entire winter.

From the base of the plant to the flower the leaves set close to the stem. The stem is white, woolly, quite stout and leafy, and grows from six to thirty inches in height. The flowers grow in little clusters at the top of the stem, each flower composed of numerous dry, overlapping, scaly-like pearl white petals, with centers of brownish-yellow, tube-shaped florets. In woods, newly cleared land, and on dry hillsides it is plentiful. Throughout Nova Scotia and Manitoba, and all the way south as far as Missouri and South Caro-

lina pearly everlasting is in full bloom from July until September.

The flowers and leaves alike are stored with nourishment for body and soul. It has a pleasant warm flavour, and is often eaten mixed with other greens, or with chopped nuts and honey. When people see this plant for the first time, they always shout with surprise, "Oh, what is this white plant?" "Who are these in white robes?" The pearly everlasting answers for itself, for in it God has placed some secrets concerning His nature, and His plans for the destiny of a child.

When St. John was asked who those people were that were dressed in white, he explained that they were the poor, honest, kind and true from earth. Some had been crippled, but they never grumbled; some had been sickly, but they never lost heart; some had been brilliant, but they used their thoughts to make others happy; some had been rich, but they resisted temptation.

Their surroundings were like dry, sandy soil, that did not supply much nourishment, yet up through hardships and setbacks they grew to be pure, true children for God. And because of their faithfulness, God did not let them die, but took them out of the world, and gave them a garment of pure white, and blessed them with everlasting life.

Immortality, then, that is the answer pearly everlasting gives to those who ask, "Who are these

in white?" For, through struggles and setbacks, it comes up out of dry soil.

Immortality is a big word, but not too big for little children to understand. Immortality is not a study so deep that only college professors can understand it. God wants children to know about it just as soon as they can walk and talk. He wants them to know that if they will shun evil and do good, He will let them live forever and ever in happiness. Immortality is simply the day that has no night.

God has made Himself so simple that even a child can converse with Him. He puzzles the wise men, who think they are so smart, but tells His secrets to "babes,"—little children. He has made His ways so easy to understand that even a fool cannot fail to see them. We do not know all about God, yet there is much of His nature we do understand, and there is no doubt He is using these flowers and plants as helps to our minds and hearts to a better understanding of Him.

It is certainly not difficult for children to understand that if they always look to Jesus for the way in which they ought to act, they will never die. A child soon learns that his body will return to dust, then why not teach him as early as possible that his soul, his mind, his understanding, his love will never die? This is immortality.

God does not ask little children to go digging through the dusty pages of preachers' books to

learn about Him. He leads them out to play in the woods and fields, and there with the pretty flowers, He teaches them. So with pearly everlasting He teaches children the lesson of immortality.

If our surroundings in life are not pleasant or encouraging, then we must remember that pearly everlasting grows up through gritty, sandy soil, yet God has given it a gown of pearl and made its leaves to look like silver in the night, and besides He has given it a sweet flavour. Surely He will do more for us.

Two boys were flying a kite. They were "tickled" to see the breezes sweep their kite through the air, but suddenly a gust of wind caused the kite to "duck" downward, and to become entangled with some wires. Instantly one of those boys swore. The other boy said, "Ssh, ssh! some one will hear you. Swearing won't get our kite down." He "shinned" up the pole and soon had the kite free. He met a problem without soiling his tongue or sinning. His reward will be a robe of white, and everlasting life. That little chap will always shine like the silver of the pearly everlasting all through life.

So God teaches children the lesson of immortality, and grown-ups as well, not by long arguments of logic, and deep books, that many children may never be able to read, but by beautiful flowers He plants in the fields and woodlands.

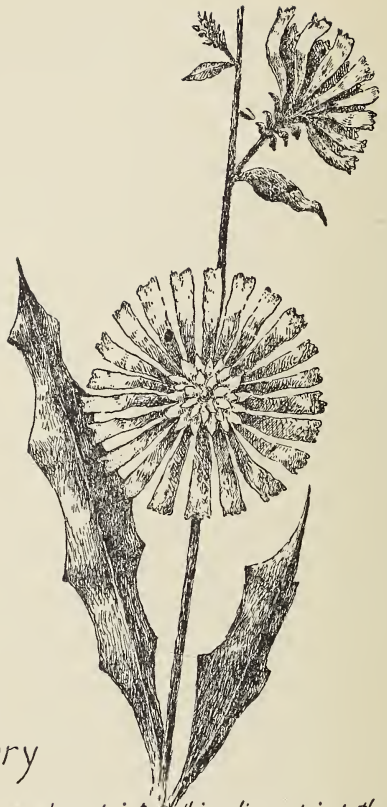
God is very anxious that His children should know Him. He loves little children, and He wants them to know that just as the pearly everlasting remains fresh and pure long after it is cut from the field in which it had grown, so the lives of boys and girls stay active and uncorrupted all through the ages, after they are called out of this world in which they too have grown.

We think of Jesus as dressed in white. All the artists paint Him with a white gown in folds about His body. White is the colour that represents purity, and so everything pure will stand the test of time. Pearly everlasting in its beautiful white flower and silvery leaf seems to say, "Immortality! Immortality!"

And then if we think a while and study a little longer this strange flower with a message from Eternity, we will almost hear the voice of Jesus saying:

"Whosoever looketh upon Me, shall never die."

"Weeds, weeds, weeds," people say, and then with an air of disgust they give them a kick, but as we draw nearer to these weeds, they become to us the very words of God.



The Chicory

The roots are shaved into thin slices, dried, then roasted brown, and used as coffee. The leaves can be eaten in salad.

XXIV

THE CHICORY

The Magic Touch

A BEAUTIFUL sight, any time from July until October, is a field in which wild chicory is growing. Sometimes it is mixed with wild carrot, and then it is a picture not very soon forgotten. Chicory is so common it is constantly sneered at by many people, but they forget God made it.

The town of Nazareth, in the Holy Land, had a very bad reputation, and whenever its name was mentioned, folks from neighbouring towns would sneer. A man named Philip came rushing to Nathaniel one day and said, "We have found Jesus, of Whom Moses did write, Jesus of Nazareth." Nathaniel answered, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and Philip was just as quick with his reply, for he said, "Come and see."

So the beautiful violet-blue chicory has become that common that farmers and gardeners think no good can come out of it, but when we become better acquainted with this plant it is not long showing us why God allows it to grow.

With its stiff, tough and sharp-cornered stem it grows from one to three feet in height. The leaves are dark grayish-green, quite long and coarsely toothed. The flowers are a violet-blue, and are found almost everywhere in the eastern half of the United States.

For many years roots of chicory have been shaved into very thin slices and dried in large ovens. When dried, the slices are roasted brown, and used as coffee. Dealers often mix ground chicory with ground coffee, making a cheap substitute that only poor people purchase. People who know the taste of coffee turn up their noses at chicory.

When the leaves become about ten inches long and droop to the ground, unable to bear their own weight, they should be picked for salad. They contain a valuable form of salt that purifies the blood. After the first frost, the roots may be dug up, packed into moist sand with the heads up, in a cellar where they will sprout, then they will produce a delicious blanched chicory called "Barbe de Capucin," or "Witloof." Should any one again ask, "Can any good come out of that common chicory?" answer quickly, "Come and see."

The fact is that chicory is better than coffee. Though chicory is despised and coffee is desired, the chicory is the better friend to man. How many times doctors must forbid their patients from drinking coffee. We can always drink

chicory because it has no such poisons as coffee,—it has been cleansed by God in the growing.

It contains neither tannin acid nor theine, and coffee has both of these poisons. There is only about two per cent. of sugar in roast coffee, while in chicory there is at least nine per cent. Coffee contains from fourteen to twenty per cent. of indigestible fat; chicory has from one to two per cent. only.

Chicory may be called common, while coffee is preferred, yet it is free from poison, contains more sugar, and is more easily digested. Isn't it shameful that prejudices like that should be harboured against a plant so wholesome?

But see how helpful Christ was to the people, yet they called Him common just because He befriended sinners. His life, like the chicory, was free from poison, sweet and helpful. We may live in a neighbourhood or town, or even with a family that has a bad name, and we may be called common, but if God touches our hearts with His magic touch, great good will come from our lives.

Jesus picked His twelve disciples from among the common people. Some were rough, hard-working fishermen; others were rogues. One writer said they were "common clay." Another said:

"They touched His garment's fold, and soon
The Heavenly Alchemist transformed their very
dust to gold."

When God touches any life, all poisonous thoughts, words and deeds depart. A child touched by the magic touch of God does not burn mother's heart with anxiety, as the acid of coffee burns the body. There is marvellous magic in that touch of God's.

On March 31, 1860, in a Gypsy tent, near Epping Forest, England, in the midst of most common surroundings, a little Gypsy boy was born. His father lived a worthless life for many years, and this boy was looked upon as a very common child.

Gypsies know nothing of God or the Bible, and they care nothing for religion. They steal everything they can, or "find" it, as they call theft. When this Gypsy boy was still very young his mother died. His father was so wicked that he spent a good part of the time in jail. For a while he had been a common fiddler in cheap dance houses and public liquor saloons. He would play and drink until he became a disgusting sight. The child danced while his father played, then the hat was passed around. When the father became quite intoxicated, that shrewd Gypsy lad would pass the hat again, and keep that collection for himself.

One day the boy's father went to a Methodist meeting in Cambridge, and the congregation was singing:

"There is a fountain filled with blood."

He was so touched by the singing he fell on the floor, and the child thought his father had died, but in a few moments the father stood up on his feet and said, " God touched me, I am converted." And then and there that common saloon fiddler was cleansed by the magic touch of God.

Not long afterward the boy was sitting on an old tree stump near his father's tent, and there God touched him. He gave his heart to God and declared that never again would he wander like a Gypsy, without hope and without Christ. From that old tree stump that boy went out to be the world-renowned evangelist, Gypsy Smith.

No longer a Gypsy dancer in cheap saloons, but now a minister of God, a preacher and a prophet. Like the chicory, all the poison went out of him when God touched him and cleansed him. He might have been called common, but God's touch made him like a healing balm to thousands of weary souls who have listened to him preach and sing.

" What God has cleansed, that call not thou common." Let us be like the chicory, just a plain, ordinary, every-day person,—perhaps classed with the common, but God-touched, free from words and ways that burn like an acid.

Pimpernel - a salad plant

It is also a reliable weather prophet.

XXV

THE PIMPERNEL

The Weather-Glass on Your Face

OVER the face of the heavens there is a weather-glass. Every child knows what a weather-glass is—that instrument that indicates the state of the atmosphere, or the changes of weather.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were people who did not like Jesus, so they were always trying to confuse Him. One evening Jesus reminded them that though in their smartness they could read the signs of weather in the sky, they could not read the signs of the times, and of their own coming ruin. He said, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red." And it is always so; if the sky is red in the evening, the next day will be a clear one.

God has made a weather-glass among the weeds, over the face of the earth, as well as over the face of the heavens. In waste, sandy places, especially near the coast, there grows a brilliant little flower, with a rare shade of salmon, or coppery-red blossom, at the end of a square, smooth, slender, and rather weak stem. Often the plant lies prostrate on the ground. This flower is the pimpernel.

Years ago the Greeks believed it drove away sadness and made people lively. To-day many people call it the poor man's weather-glass, because it is a reliable weather prophet.

But the pimpernel is also a nourishing food, often eaten as a salad. Eaten plentifully, it will give relief to any one suffering with asthma. Some people use it for poultices. Sprouting up in its frail and weak way, where very little else grows, near the ever-roaring sea, this plant saves multitudes from the distress of storm and disease.

Francis Bacon, an English writer who lived about three hundred years ago, mentioned the pimpernel in one of his books, saying, "There is a small red flower in the stubble field . . . which if it open in the morning, you may be sure of a fine day to follow." Workmen and shepherds to this very day pay strict attention to the warning of the pimpernel. That is why it is called the poor man's weather-glass. Even poets honour it, and one has written:

> "Pimpernel, whose brilliant flower
> Closes against the approaching shower,
> Warning the swain to sheltering bower
> From humid air secure."

So through the centuries this little weather prophet plant has been saving many from the storms, chasing away sadness, furnishing food, and making medicines.

Pimpernel has a bright, rosy face, and when its petals are wide open, it shows the sign of a good day. Every child with a bright, open face, has the sign of a clear day in that face. The child that gets up in the morning with a face full of frowns will not make a very pleasant day for mother, father, school teacher, or anybody else, no, not even for himself.

Then too the child that cannot look you right in the eye, but looks with a sneaky, side glance, shows the sign of deceit that will bring many a sorrow. All over such a face men will read untruthfulness. Storms of disappointment and grief are ahead for such children. It is the bright, smiling, wide open, honest face that flashes briskly, and meets eye with eye while talking, that shows the sign of a beautiful day.

There was a man who was such a grouch that his wife had to adopt certain signs by which to inform the children whether or not he was in good humour. When they came into the house they would say, "Mother, how did the sky look from the kitchen window this evening?" If she answered, "Gray and stormy," they knew their father was cranky. If she answered, "The sky was red and clear," they knew their father was pleasant.

But who wants to be that kind of person against whom the whole family has to be warned? People like that make it gloomy wherever they go. It

is best for children to be like the pimpernel, when it shows the sign of good weather, bearing a bright, wide open face. Children who jump out of bed in the morning with bright, frank faces, drive sadness away.

Now let us consider the meekness of the pimpernel plant. It does not push other plants out of its way, but grows quietly and somewhat by itself. It is often found bent low to the ground, and in many instances with its stem running almost along the ground.

Meekness does not mean that a child must be a "soft-cake," or a "putty-boy." It means simply that a child will be gentle, and mild of temper, and will allow people to teach him. He will not go about shouting as if he knew everything there was to be known. Ugliness, impudence, and know-it-all-ness soon become stamped on a child's face, and any sensible person need take but one glance to read the signs of it there. Kindness, meekness, and gentleness also become stamped in the same way, and people can see all these traits in the expression of the face. This is the weather-glass that is on every child's face.

Another very interesting trait of the pimpernel is found in its stem. The stem is square. To be square, you know, is to be true, honest, and loyal. And the trait of honesty has its sign in the face of the child.

The Duke of Wellington was once approached

by the Prime Minister of the Court of Hyderabad, who offered more than half a million dollars if he would tell certain government secrets. Wellington quietly answered, "It appears then that you are capable of keeping a secret." "Yes, certainly," replied the Prime Minister. "Then so am I," said Wellington. True and loyal to his country, square and honest with his fellow men, he brought blessings to everybody. While in service in India, he could have made millions of dollars dishonestly, but it is to his great honour that he died a comparatively poor man.

Once a man said to a boy, "Why didn't you pocket some of those pears; nobody was there to see you." The boy was one of those bright, wide, open-faced chaps; so he answered, "Yes, there was; I was there to see myself, and I don't intend ever to see myself do a dishonest thing."

If a little flower can drive so much sadness from people's hearts, and lead them to shelter when a storm is threatening, how much more can a little child do? There is no punishment for treading on a flower, but Jesus said if any man tread on a child, "It would be better for that man that he be flung into the sea."

To have a face that shows signs of kindness, meekness, honesty, and like the wide open pimpernel forecasts pleasant days, that is the ambition of every good child.

The Sweet Woodruff

The older it gets, the sweeter it is. When thoroughly dried, it is packed among clean linen to give it a sweet odor.

XXVI

THE SWEET WOODRUFF

From Shadow to Sunshine

WHEN we look at folks who do not seem to have much trouble in this world, we usually say they are living lives of sunshine. But here is a flower that shows us how in the shadow as well as in the sunshine, there is sweetness and beauty to be found.

In the very shady places of the woods, where many another flower will not grow, the sweet woodruff spreads its beauty and hands out its perfume. It grows only about six or eight inches high, yet small as it is, it is a flower of great service.

It is a wholesome food, with a very pleasant taste, and is used as a salad, also as a sweet herb. As it grows old, it becomes much sweeter, and even after it dies, it remains sweet. Thousands pick it, allow it to dry, then pack the dried leaves among linen to give it a sweet odour—it has a smell like that of new-mown hay.

If plants refused to grow in shady spots then every shadowy place would be barren. But sweet woodruff is a joy to find, because with its flowers

and fragrance it beautifies the places where no sunlight ever comes. It is often planted in the shadow of a tree or house and it makes the lawn a carpet of beauty. It receives its reward for serving in the shadows, in that "E'en down to old age," it keeps its sweetness, and even after it withers, it gives its dead body of leaves to sweeten the garments and bedding of thousands of people.

How different this world would be if children everywhere just tried to brighten the dark spots in others' lives. We need not worry about our reward, for the Bible tells us that "They that dwell, or serve, in the shadow, shall come out into the sunlight."

Some children want to be first in everything. In the crowd they trample on every one else, elbow and edge their way through until they have a front seat. Their motto is to "take care of A number 1 first." A certain group of children were having their picture taken, and several cried to be in the front row. When the picture was finished the greedy children looked fearful with their faces all screwed up, for the sun glared directly upon them, but the children who were willing to fill up the ends and stand in the rear took beautifully, because they were shaded from the sun. Like the sweet woodruff they showed up sweet in the shadow.

Not long ago in the city of New York a boy fought his way to the edge of the curb to watch a

parade. When the mounted soldiers came by, the crowd behind the boy pushed so hard that he was thrown out under a horse and almost killed.

Very often when an entertainment is planned in a Church or club, some children want the principal part. Perhaps they could serve much better in some less prominent part. If every one got first place, there could be no entertainment. Some must be willing to serve in shady places, like the sweet woodruff.

An orchestra could not produce harmony if every one insisted upon playing the solo part. The players who go back in the shadows and play second, third and even fourth violin parts, are the ones who make the harmony. These are the players the Bible honours when it says, "They that dwell under the shadow, shall receive their reward."

In a large city lot the snow and rain crusted the ground with hard ice. Dozens of children enjoyed themselves "ponnying" down the little hill. One poor boy had no sled and was using a coal shovel instead. He would sit in the scoop of the shovel, take a grip on the handle, then slide down the hill as well as any fellow with a sled. He had so much more fun with that shovel than the others did with their sleds that every other fellow wanted to try the shovel. The boy who can get fun out of an old coal shovel because too poor to own a sled is growing in the shadow, like sweet wood-

ruff. He did not cry about his poverty; he went home and got a coal shovel.

"Rivets! Rivets!" yelled a man who was standing on an immense steel girder about thirty feet from the ground. He called to a man who was on the ground by a blow furnace, getting rivets red hot. These men were working on an elevated road, over which millions of people were to ride to business or pleasure. The man by the furnace took a red-hot rivet from the fire with long pincers and tossed it through the air to the fellow on the girder, who caught it in a small tin pail.

The rivet was then set inside of the girder away up in a corner where no one could ever see it. Suppose the little rivet had life and refused to serve in that unseen corner; suppose it insisted upon going where it could be seen by the passing throng,—why we could never build an elevated road, or a subway or even a house. How fortunate for the busy multitudes that thousands of rivets are willing to serve in the shady places.

But let me tell you about a farmer whose barn I helped to tear down. While ripping out the timbers he came to a stout wooden beam which had been the principal support of the barn, yet completely hidden from view. "Ah!" said he, "there is the fellow that has been holding this barn together, through storm and gale, for the past sixty years." Then he patted the beam as he

would a faithful horse. The rest of the old barn was burned, but this beam that had served in the shade was kept for the main support of the farmer's new house. "They that dwell in the shadow shall come to light." So it is with sweet woodruff. So it is with us.

Jesus never pushed Himself to the front. He never refused to serve because His Name was last on the list, or forgotten from the program. When He was born there was no room for Him in a house, so in the shade of a stable His little life came into this world. All through life He kept in the background. When the crowd wanted to make Him king, He slipped away. When some one told Him He was good, He quickly replied, "There is none good but God."

But when this old world is torn down, as the old barn was, people everywhere will then see that down in the center of it all this humble Jesus was the Prop, the Support, that held it together through the storms of the ages.

Even now He does not ask to be a crown on our heads. He asks only for a secret place in our hearts. Oh, how lovely to be like the sweet woodruff and willingly serve in the shadowy spots, and there send out beauty and fragrance. They that serve faithfully in the shadow here, shall surely some day live in a new and brighter glory.

The Borage

The tender leaflets and stems are very refreshing when used in soups. It produces fine honey.

XXVII

THE BORAGE

The Star-Rays Over Every Cradle

"Long years ago, o'er Bethlehem's hills
Was seen a wondrous thing;
As shepherds watched their sleeping flocks
They heard the angels sing.

"The anthem rolled among the clouds
When earth was hushed and still;
Its notes proclaimed sweet peace on earth,
To all mankind good will."

TO the shepherds the sight and song of the angels was a wondrous thing, but to the wise men the sight of the brilliant star was the wondrous thing.

There is a little plant called "Star-of-Bethlehem," but if I had my way I would give that name to the borage flower. Not so much because of its appearance, but because of what it does. In all its works it compels us to think of the things Jesus did.

While men cannot see that star upon which the wise men gazed, God has nevertheless filled the heavens with beautiful stars, and when we see the borage flower we feel quite sure that God has also

covered the ground with stars that have a message for our minds and souls.

The star-of-Bethlehem flower is white, and that may be why it received its name. But it has six petals and does not in any way point to the sweet Baby in the manger at Bethlehem.

The borage has the shape of a five-pointed star, and some are blue, some pink, some violet red, and others white, but the heart of each flower is always white.

The bees will fly miles to find this plant because its sweetness produces a wonderful honey.

The leaves, when full grown, are rough, like flannel, and are used for a salad, while the blossoms and tender upper leaves are used to make the salad dish look pretty. The tender leaflets and stems contain a sticky juice which is very cooling and refreshing when used in soups. The entire plant grows to a height of two or three feet. A salad decorated with these beautiful borage flowers would cheer the most depressed, and perhaps that is why some say it will drive away sadness. Does not this make us think of the Christ?

The juice of the borage yields crystals of nitre and table salt. The fresh juice gives thirty per cent. of nitrate of potash. The nitre or nitrate of potash which comes from the older sprays, gives a pleasant coolness to water, and it is often used to give additional coolness to summer drinks, such as water, lemonade, and all fruit juice drinks.

Like many other wild plants, the borage grows in places that continually surprise folks. It grows in gardens, but more often in wild waste places, neglected fields and even on rubbish heaps.

The wise men who followed the rays of that first Christmas Star came from different parts of the world, and probably represented different races of men. Yet when they found the Holy Babe, they all gave gifts and bowed before Him. Jesus was the same sweet Babe to each one.

And this Manger scene is plainly written in every borage flower. Suppose a group of children with various tastes and customs from different parts of the world were to search for a borage flower. Those who like pink would find one, those who like blue would find one, and each would find his favourite colour. When the picking would be over, the children from Japan, from India, from France, and from Russia would join with the children of America to sing the praises of the beautiful borage. So each child finds his Christ, and the star-rays shine down over every cradle.

No matter how Jesus appears to the different races of men, or to the different denominations of belief, no matter what colour His hair or skin, no matter what style His garment, way down in His heart He is the same for every one under the sun. This is like the borage flower. Its petals are differently tinted but its heart is always white. So,

too, when every shade of Christian belief shall come to the heart of Christ they will unite to sing His praise, for they will discover He is the one Lord over all.

The borage is a miracle-solver. When Moses led the people of Israel into the Wilderness of Shur, for three days they could find no water. And when they did find some at Marah, it was too bitter to drink. How they complained, and how Moses prayed for help. God told Moses to cast a certain tree or plant into the water. Moses did so and the water immediately became sweet. The Bible does not say what this plant was, but had Moses used the borage it would have accomplished the same result. It is not difficult then to believe that the bitter waters were made sweet, when we know what the borage can do.

And isn't that the way Christ works everywhere? He sweetens up everything. He takes the bitterness out of children's hearts, and removes the sting of guilt from those who fellowship with Him.

The prophet Isaiah said that " Jesus would grow up as a tender plant." He is the tender plant that sweetens every bitter experience of life, and this is another reason why I would call the beautiful borage plant the star-of-Bethlehem. It also explains why the poet said it would drive away sadness.

Still more is to be said for this attractive little

flower. Remember, it cools and refreshes the drinks into which its juice is poured. When men go to war their hearts are full of bitterness and murder, but the instant Christ comes into their hearts, they hate strife and warfare. So when men become angry in sin, and little children are heated in tongue and temper, how quickly Jesus cools and calms them. Sometimes you stamp your feet in a rage and refuse to obey mother, and sometimes your tongue becomes sizzling hot with unkind words; just let Jesus into your thought and heart, and all those peppery hot words will vanish,—your tongue will be cooled instantly. Such is the influence of Christ everywhere.

The rays from the sweet starry borage point directly to the Manger where the Holy Babe was born. Yes, long years ago the star in the heavens was a wondrous sight, but to-day in the fields and even on garbage heaps the dainty borage flower is a wondrous sight, reminding children and men of the Christ Whose light and power shine down over every cradle where a baby is being reared.

Children, wouldn't you second my motion to give this flower the name star-of-Bethlehem?

The Purslane

Two or three ounces of boiled purslane will supply a man with sufficient strength for a long journey.

XXVIII

THE PURSLANE OR PUSLEY

Wedge In

THE woodsman splits huge tree trunks by driving in a wedge little by little, and that is the way every child will have to open up a place for himself in this world.

At a Sunday School picnic the children were told that only those who were seated would be served with ice-cream. About fifty lads made a "bee-line" for the front seat, and when the rush was over one little chap was left standing. As the teacher came along with the ice-cream, he began to squeeze into a space that did not seem large enough to admit the blade of a jack-knife. He wriggled and wriggled, and the lad next to him kept saying, "Wedge in, wedge in." In another minute he got the place, but only by wedging in.

There is a wild plant that might well be called the wedge plant, because its thick, meaty leaves are wedge shaped. It is purslane or pusley. The smooth, juicy stems shoot out in all directions from the root and, with the leaves, lie upon or rise a few inches from the ground. A tiny lone yellowish flower is lodged in the center of a circle of

round-cornered, dull green or reddish leaves, that grow at the end of the branches. In the scorching sun of a midsummer noonday, these flowers open.

Purslane is found in waste places anywhere, and probably was first found in the southwestern part of the United States. It thrives in the fiercest sun. Gardeners hate it as a common trailing weed in sandy soil, yet it is the friend of every hungry and sick person. The thick stalks are good pickled in salt and vinegar for winter salads. Some eat the whole plant with oil and vinegar, and some mince it, mix it with honey, and make a salad of it in that way. Still others eat it cold after it has been boiled.

Then, too, the flowers ripen many seeds which are used in medicine preparations.

The Indians boiled purslane, and carried it with them on long journeys, because two or three ounces a day will give a man enough strength to endure a great strain. It is used for many ailments, and also for the teeth. Years ago some imaginative folks even spread it about their beds as a protection against evil spirits.

The gardener digs madly at this plant, tears it out root and all, then throws it away to die. But the hungry man pulls it gently from the ground, examines it, and discovers a food full of strength. The sick man is not rough with it either. He analyzes it in his laboratory and discovers a heal-

ing medicine in its leaves and flowers. Even the preacher stops when he sees this queer little plant that thrives in the boiling hot sun. He studies it and finds a beautiful story.

The tiny purslane blossoms seem like little baby boys and girls, when they come into this world. Every one who looks at them says, "My, but aren't they tiny?" And they are tiny.

Theodore Roosevelt was a tiny baby. He was like the tiny purslane flower. He was so tiny his parents never expected him to live. When he grew to be quite a boy he was still weak and sickly. His father took him to different parts of the world, hoping the changes of climate would make him stronger.

When Roosevelt became a young man he went to the Maine woods and tried to build up his frail body. Bill Sewall, a guide, says that when he first saw Roosevelt he was a "thin, pale youngster, with bad eyes and a weak heart." The friend who came with Roosevelt said, "Sewall, I want you to take that young fellow Theodore under your special care. Be careful of him, see that he doesn't take too hard jaunts. He is not strong, but he has got a great deal of ambition and grit . . . he would go until he fell."

The weak body and tiny mind that was in baby Roosevelt became great because he wedged in little by little wherever he could. Once while waiting in an outer office to see a certain man he pulled

from his pocket a small volume of Greek history and read it diligently until called. Every moment of his life he was busy wedging in something, to build up either his body or his mind.

As a result of this driving at things little by little, Theodore Roosevelt became one of the finest examples of physical strength and mental power in all the world. On the evening of October 14, 1912, in Milwaukee, while coming out of a hotel on his way to deliver an address, a crank shot him in the chest. Mr. Roosevelt insisted upon going to the auditorium to make his speech and there he stood before several thousands of people for more than an hour after he had been shot, until he had finished, even though the bullet was in his chest and the blood was streaming down his body. The physicians who probed for the bullet marvelled at the toughness of his flesh and sinews. Dr. F. L. Terrell said, " He is one of the most powerful men I have ever seen on an operating table."

Purslane tells this story of how to conquer weakness of any kind, by its wedge-shaped leaves that completely surround the flower. So then the child who wedges in on every side will sooner or later be a very useful citizen.

This is the way we go through school. We learn little by little while we are wedging into one class after another. When we graduate we wedge into college, and then we wedge through college. After we are through college we wedge into busi-

ness, and so we wedge through life. If the lesson is difficult, we must say to ourselves, "Little by little I will drive," and it will not be long before we shall rise to places of leadership in the commercial and professional world.

Our characters are developed in this way. The tongue, the temper, the mind, the heart, the whole life is mastered little by little. The Bible tells us of some people who had to gain knowledge by studying "line upon line, and here a little and there a little." First small lessons are learned, and then the larger ones. By and by great power has been gathered, and like the purslane plant we possess virtue and strength that will sustain our bodies and minds through long tests of sorrow, sickness, and temptation.

So little by little a child understands God and His Word. Driving little by little with ambition and grit and faith in God we shall discover a spiritual power that will carry us through a long, long eternity.

What a plant! It gives us food and medicine, and besides it teaches us to wedge in and thus solve problems and mysteries.

The Wild Carrot

Dainty and beautiful, yet thoroughly hated.

XXIX

THE WILD CARROT

Running Wild

IN August the beautiful wild carrot is like a decoration over the fields and roadsides. If we judged it by its beauty alone, it would be given a place ahead of many garden plants. Each flower is made up of one little purple flower in the center, and a great number of tiny white flowers in a cluster about that center. When fully opened it has a lace-like appearance; when half open, it is hollow like a bird's nest. Because of this it has the names of "Queen Anne's Lace," and also "Bird's Nest."

It grows rapidly and abundantly, and like the thistle, its roots go deep, as if to defy those who seek to destroy it. The root is not poison, but is very sharp and biting. It tastes and smells like the cultivated carrot, but of course is not as sweet.

When we are suffering with cold, sore throat, or bronchitis, some doctors prescribe an oil called "Pinene," which is produced from the root of the wild carrot.

Though beautiful as a flower, it is hated by the farmer. How sad, that a plant bearing fine,

dainty, feathery leaves, and flowers as delicate as rare lace, should be unloved. When such a flower is hated, there must be some good reason for it.

However, as we examine the wild carrot, we are quite sure we discover the trouble. Wild carrot is in the wrong place. It is a good carrot that has run wild, and when it runs wild, it keeps its beauty, but loses its usefulness. It produces no fruit for relish, no vegetable for food; but so it is when things run wild. For if boys and girls run wild, they soon lose their usefulness, and become disliked.

The wild carrot can be restored, but it takes patience and time. If its seeds are planted in rich soil, and seeds from that flower are planted again, and this is kept up for several seasons, it will become like the cultivated carrot. But see how long it takes to get all the wildness out of a prodigal carrot. Yet with care and close attention it will lose its sharpness, and become a good carrot, possessing sugar, starch and protein, fine for food.

If the seeds of the cultivated carrot plant be permitted to fall in neglected ground, it will soon become the hated and scorned weed.

The ancient people of Israel were taken away into slavery, because they sinned against God; they ran wild. But God did not forsake them. He sent a preacher to them whose name was Ezekiel, and Ezekiel tried to bring the people back to their senses. He said, "You were once beautiful and

useful, but now, by your sin, you have lost your attractiveness, and your usefulness as well." Children, the wild carrot stands like a sentinel on the roadside, warning us of judgment—the judgment that comes to the child who runs wild.

There were two little brothers reared in the same home. The older boy's name was Crafty; the younger's Dutiful. Crafty was a beautiful child, and everywhere he went people stopped to admire him. Dutiful was not nearly so attractive.

As Crafty grew, he ran wild. He was disobedient, deceitful, and dishonest. One day he stole his brother's skates, and sold them for five cents to a strange boy, just because his mother refused to give him money for a jack-knife.

As people became acquainted with him, they could hardly believe that so beautiful a boy could be so wicked. Crafty grew so disobedient that his parents placed him in a home for unruly boys. For three years he was kept there, and during that time he played so many deceitful tricks that every one detested his beauty.

One day a visitor to the institution saw Crafty, and she said to the superintendent, "What a beautiful child that is." "Yes," answered the superintendent, "but he's a little thief." In a second the visitor turned away, no more interested in that beautiful child. Crafty was so wild he made his beauty to be hated.

Dutiful was a very different boy. He helped

his parents, ran the errands with gladness, and always returned with the correct change. Though not as handsome as Crafty, he was loved by every one, because he was truthful and reliable.

A wild boy is like the wild carrot—sharp and bitter. But, like the wild carrot, even such a child can be restored. If he plant himself in the wholesome surroundings of a happy home, where mother and father can care for him, he will soon lose his bitterness, and become sweet with sugar, and sturdy with starch and protein; that is, his character will become noble.

In the Bible we read of a beautiful boy, whose father was very rich. The lad began to run wild, and one day went to his father and said, "Father, I want my share of money from your estate now." His father immediately counted it out and gave it to him.

The boy then went off to a far country, where his family could not see what he was doing. There he squandered his money right and left, having a gay time, a wild time. But soon his money was all spent, and the beautiful boy was hungry and homeless. He did not have a friend in that strange land, so he went to a certain man for work, and the man sent him out to care for the pigs. He had been so wicked his beauty was no longer attractive. He made his beauty to be hated.

While watching the pigs the boy thought of the

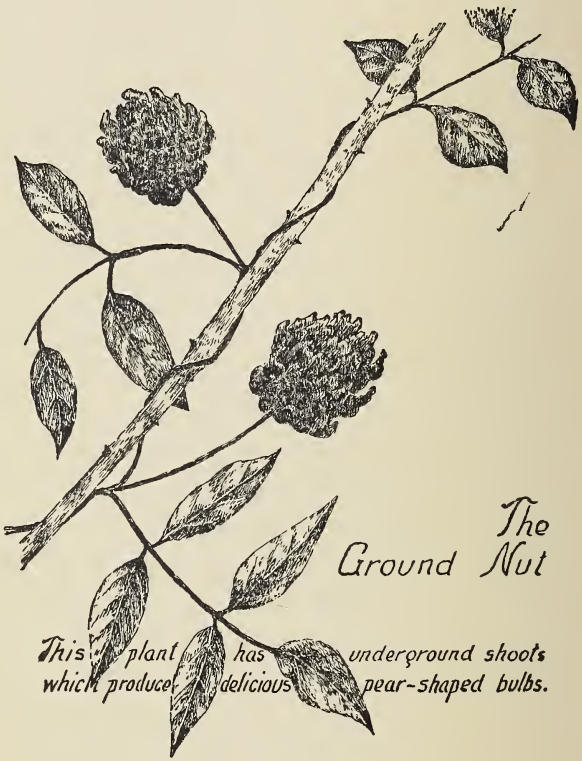
comfortable home he had left. He thought of that bountiful table, spread with good things to eat. He thought of his kind father, against whom he had sinned. Finally he plucked up courage and said, "I will not stay here with these pigs. I will go back to my father, and ask him to forgive me."

As quickly as his feet could carry him he rushed home. When the boy drew near to the old homestead, his good father saw him coming and ran out to meet him. Oh, how happy he was to see the wild boy home again. He hugged him, and kissed him, and arranged a dinner for him. Then he helped that boy to get all the wildness out of his heart, so that he might be useful again.

No matter how good and beautiful a child may be, if like a good carrot they linger about dangerous and neglected places, they will soon run wild, and their beauty will be hated. An honest and obedient child is always beautiful with a character that never can lose its charm.

It must be terrible to be beautiful, yet unloved. But, sadder still, to learn that we made our beauty to be hated because we ran wild.

Thank you, Wild Carrot, for the warning.



The Ground Nut

This plant has underground shoots which produce delicious pear-shaped bulbs.

XXX

THE GROUND NUT

Climbing Over Fences

THINK of pulling pears out of the ground as people do potatoes. Well, many a country lad has yanked the ground nut flower out of the ground, and then picked pears from the roots. This plant has underground shoots which produce strings of little pear-shaped bulbs, from one to two inches long, and the farmer's boy knows something about their delicious flavour.

The ground nut is found in the wildest places, and is rarely seen on cultivated grounds. It has what is called a compound leaf, because made up of sometimes five and sometimes seven toothless, smooth, light green, egg-shaped, pointed leaflets. The flowers grow in thick rounded clusters, on stems that shoot out of the joint formed by the leaf and plant stems. They are maroon or lilac-brown in colour.

On the borders of swamps or wet meadows, or in damp ground, during August and September, this plant can be seen in bloom. It is found from New Brunswick to Minnesota and southward

to the Gulf. By some it is called the wild bean, and grows from four to five feet long, mounting over walls and fences, and winding itself about shrubs and other plants.

It is forever seeking the light, and so any child who is forever yearning for the truth and for the most complete knowledge of life, will become beautiful in character and countenance, even as the ground nut is beautiful.

One of the first lessons baby has to learn is the climbing up over obstacles. At first baby is helpless on the floor, but in a few days he catches sight of the dish-pan near the stove, and struggles to reach it. Soon baby crawls, then toddles. And how he struggles to walk. He falls and becomes covered with bumps and bruises, and frightens Mother half to death, but in a couple of years that baby is running and jumping and climbing fences.

When the baby learns to talk he is just as clumsy with his tongue as he was with his feet. We try to make the baby say sugar and he answers "Yu yu," and for violet he says "Bile over." Many hindrances have to be overcome before we learn how to speak correctly. Watch the ground nut. It overcomes the hardest obstacles. And, if a little vine can climb over baffling oppositions, surely children can overcome the hard tasks that lie in their path.

In spite of the rocks, walls, fences and over-

awing bushes, the ground nut becomes beautiful and useful. A weaker and less courageous plant would wither up and die because of the rocks in the way, but ground nut does not stop to whine; it simply buckles in to work, laughs at the rocks and fences, and soon climbs over them all.

This plant is so sweet and fragrant it is often located by its odour alone. It loves to have its roots cool and shaded in moist places, but it seeks the fullest sunlight for its leaves and flowers. In other words, it keeps its head in the sky, while its feet are still on the earth. It is not taken with its own beauty, nor silly and vain with its power. It is beautiful, yet practical.

If children would go to the fresh, cool fountain of life in God for their strength, as the ground nut goes to the cool moist spots for its nourishment, they too, like the ground nut, would not hesitate at any rock or fence that might appear in their way through life. Their "Father Which heareth them in secret" would reward them openly. With their lives rooted in God and their faces seeking the sunlight they would be bound to win.

Joseph was the little fellow's name. His father loved him. He had eleven brothers who hated him because he was the favoured son. These brothers treated Joseph very meanly, but he kept cool, and always tried to turn his face toward God,—he was seeking the sunlight of God's love.

One day Joseph told of a dream he had dreamed.

His father forbade him from mentioning it, and his brothers hated him more than ever, because the dream showed Joseph ruling over them.

A little later, away over the hills, they nearly killed him. When they saw some merchants coming on their way to Egypt, they pulled Joseph out of the pit into which they had thrown him, and sold him to these merchants. They sprinkled his robe with the blood of a goat, and took the garment to their father, telling him that wild beasts had devoured his favourite son.

In Egypt Joseph was sold again, and shortly after was thrown into prison on a false charge. While in jail he told some prisoners the meaning of their dreams, and this led to the king's asking him to tell him the meaning of a dream which he had dreamed. He interpreted the king's dream so wisely that he was set free and also made the ruler over all Egypt. The king presented him with jewels and gold, dressed him in rich clothing, and made him ride in a chariot next to him. How true it is that " Him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with Me."

The jealousy and hatred of his brothers, the drudgery of slavery, the false charge and prison term, were all piled up around Joseph like fences, yet he lodged his heart in God, and never lost an opportunity to bring his mind and face out to the sunlight. God was like a cool, refreshing nourishment to him, and so he overcame every obstacle.

But think for a moment of the barriers that stood in Christ's way. Prejudices that people had harboured for centuries, the bitter hatred of the Pharisees, the inflamed vengeance of the mob, and finally the disloyalty of His own disciples, all piled around Jesus while He was trying to save the world from sin. He was surrounded with lies, and false witnesses, then crucified; yet He did not give up. He was always thinking of the children on the other side of those barricades, and He wanted His life to reach through to them.

He kept His face up toward the light of heaven, while all the time He was going into the cool shade of the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and gather strength. If Jesus had not overcome those obstacles that were in His way, then not one of us could ever have overcome the hindrances in our path.

Jesus overcame, therefore He sits with God upon an everlasting throne. The little ground nut overcomes, therefore it sparkles as a prince among the wild flowers.

Children, shall not we too overcome? In this day when the world needs strong men and women, when the tasks of the nations call for brave and loyal citizens, shall we quit and be put to shame by a little wild plant? Joseph sat with an earthly king, but we who overcome shall sit with the heavenly King.

Index of Suggested Texts for Ministers

Common Dandelion ....."Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, and forever." —Heb. 13:8.

Common Violet ....."Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of violet." —Esther 8:15.

Marsh Marigold ....."I find no fault in this Man." —Luke 23:4.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit ....."The child did minister." —1 Sam. 2:11.

Indian Cucumber-Root ...."He could not be hid." —Mark 7:24.

Wood-Sorrel ....."He shall be to thee a Restorer of life." —Ruth 4:15.

Yarrow or Milfoil ....."So the devils besought Him . . . and Jesus said unto them go, and . . . they went." —Matt. 8:31, 32.

Forget-Me-Not ....."This do in remembrance of Me." —Luke 22:19.

Common Plantain ....."Behold the rod . . . put forth buds, and bloomed blossoms." —Num. 17:8.

Alfalfa Flowers ....."That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend." —Eph. 3:17, 18.

The Water Lily ....."I am the . . . Lily." —Song of Sol. 2:1.

Swamp Honeysuckle ....."Josiah . . . while he was yet young, began to seek after God." —2 Chron. 34:1, 3.

Arrow-Leaf or Arrow-Head."Shoot out thine arrows, and discomfit them." —Ps. 144:6.

High Bush Blackberry ...."He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death." —Phil. 2:8.

Pokeweed ..... "Ye shall know them by their fruits." —Matt. 7:16.

Cat-Tails ..... "Many shall be purified and made white." —Dan. 12:10.

Meadowsweet ..... "And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." —John 12:3.

Burdock ..... "This one thing I do." —Phil. 3:13.

Thistle ..... "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." —Prov. 27:6.

Wild Strawberry ..... "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste." —Ps. 119:103.

Rampion ..... "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." —Ps. 126:5.

Common Sunflower ..... "The thing that is hid, bringeth He forth to light." —Job 28:11.

Pearly Everlasting ..... "What are these . . . in white robes." —Rev. 7:13.

Chicory ..... "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." —Acts 10:15.

Pimpernel ..... "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red." —Matt. 16:2.

Sweet Woodruff ..... "They that dwell under His shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn." —Hosea 14:7.

Borage ..... "And the Lord showed Moses a tree, (plant) which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." —Exod. 15:25.

Purslane or Pusley ..... "Little by little I will drive." —Exod. 23:30.

Wild Carrot ..... "Thou hast made thy beauty to be abhorred."—Ezek. 16:25.

Ground Nut ..... "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me." —Rev. 3:21.

Printed in the United States of America

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